CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY: THE CHURCH'S JOURNEY FROM HEROIC SOLO LEADERSHIP TO GENERATIVE TEAM LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

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by
Jorge Agustin Acevedo
United Theological Seminary, May 2023

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The context of this project was Grace Church, a multi-site congregation in the United Methodist Church. The problem addressed was the impulse toward heroic solo leadership in the local church. The result was a lack of sustainability and vitality for the church. The art of cultivating generative team leadership promotes local church sustainability and vitality. This project was conducted over two months. Data was collected utilizing pre/post-seminar questionnaires, focused journaling, and focused individual interviews. Because leaders in the churches participated in a seminar, they were persuaded, motivated, and equipped to cultivate generative teams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have learned from my friends in recovery and my journey of healing that gratitude is a game changer. Brain research has also taught me that gratitude even alters brain chemistry. In my spiritual journey, every morning, the listing of five things for which I am grateful has transformed how I experience God, myself, and people daily. My Doctor of Ministry journey was not taken alone but with a host of family, friends, colleagues, academics, and church partners to whom I owe a debt of thanks.

I am thankful, first of all, for my fellow pilgrims in the first Fresh Expressions and Church Renewal cohort at United Theological Seminary. Larry Frank, Sarah Wanck, Susan Arnold, Blossom Matthews, Jeff Van Dyke, Aaron Kesson, and Heather Jallad, you have become family. This three-year journey has knit our hearts, lives, and ministry together. I especially want to thank Larry and Sarah for your warm and loving invitation to be your "Papi." I am humbled.

Roz, aka Dr. Rosario Picardo, thank you for your endless encouragement and support. One of the treasured gifts of this journey has been forging a deeper partnership in the Gospel and a profound soul friendship with you. Dr. Michael Beck, the student has become greater than the maestro, my friend. You call me your mentor, but I have become your Padawan too. Thank you for the journey. The future will be fun together.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my Professional Associates: Dr. Bryan Sims, Dr. Madeline Henners, and Dr. E. Dale Locke. Your input and feedback were invaluable to my research.

Thank you to the Grace Church Operational Team, Wes Olds, Arlene Jackson, and Shari Lacey. Better known as "the Beatles," our decade and a half journey as a team has been a gift of grace at Grace. You have embodied the best of everything I have written. Thank you for your encouragement and support in this adventure.

My Doctor of Ministry project involved a group of six emerging Grace Church leaders who gave up nine hours of Sunday evening time plus homework and interview time to help me substantiate my findings. Thank you, friends. You are amazing.

Most of all, I want to thank my wife, Cheryl. More than anyone, you sacrificed not only the time I was away at school but also the countless hours I was reading, researching, and writing my dissertation. Our 41 years together are a testimony to God's grace and your patience. I love you.

Soli Deo Gloria.

DEDICATION

In the summer of 2006, I hit a wall in ministry. Our church had grown considerably while my inner world had diminished, and my leadership skills had hit a ceiling. By divine providence, I was introduced to the ministry of Spiritual Leadership, Inc. (SLI) and co-founder Craig Robertson. SLI's mission is to help leaders build healthy teams who cultivate transformational environments and fruitful disciple-making processes. It was "exactly what the Doctor ordered" for my weary soul. That summer, I began the long, arduous, and painful journey of unlearning heroic solo leadership and learning a new way, the old way of Jesus, the way of building generative teams. I dedicate this work to Craig Robertson, my coach, friend, and partner in the joyful journey of following our itinerating Rabbi.

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ABBREVIATIONS

NASB	New American Standard Bible
NIV	New International Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
SLI	Spiritual Leadership, Inc.
UMC	United Methodist Church

My life is a witness to vulgar grace — a grace that amazes as it offends. A grace that pays the eager beaver who works all day long the same wage as the grinning drunk who shows up at ten till five. A grace that hikes up the robe and runs breakneck toward the prodigal reeking of sin and wraps him up and decides to throw a party, no ifs, ands, or buts. A grace that raises bloodshot eyes to a dying thief's request — "Please, remember me" — and assures him, "You bet!" A grace that is the pleasure of the Father, fleshed out in the carpenter Messiah, Jesus the Christ, who left his Father's side not for heaven's sake, but for our sakes, yours and mine. This vulgar grace is indiscriminate compassion. It works without asking anything of us. It's not cheap. It's free, and as such will always be a banana peel for the orthodox foot and a fairy tale for the grown-up sensibility. Grace is sufficient even though we huff and puff with all our might to try and find something or someone that it cannot cover. Grace is enough. He is enough. Jesus is enough.

—Brennan Manning, *All is Grace: A Ragamuffin's Memoirs*

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One, "Ministry Focus," my spiritual journey, the context of my ministry, and my ministry journey are described in detail. From growing up in a dysfunctional family of origin to my undiagnosed addictions, my testimony is witness to "vulgar grace" and "indiscriminate compassion." For 26 years, my ministry context has been Grace Church, a multi-site United Methodist congregation with three campuses in Southwest Florida. In this context, I have made and continue to make the journey from heroic solo leader to generative team leader as our church continues to make this long journey too.

The focus biblical text for Chapter Two, "Biblical Foundation – Moses and the Consequences of a Burned-Out Leader," is Ex 18. The ancient biblical story of Moses recounted in the Book of Exodus retells the flight of God's people from bondage in Pharaoh's Egypt with Moses as God's appointed leader. Soon after the hegira from enslavement in Northern Africa, Moses transitioned from prophet to Egypt's king to pastor of millions of wandering Hebrew Habiru. Leadership and management of the fickle followers of Yahweh become his new daily work in the wilderness of Sinai.

By Ex 18, Moses is exhausted. He finds himself "spinning too many plates." His father-in-law, Jethro, becomes a voice of wisdom and sanity. With the skill of a drug and alcohol interventionist, Jethro points out that Moses' leadership and management pace were unstainable for him and the people in his charge. Jethro says to his exhausted heroic solo leader, son-in-law, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself

out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone" (Ex 18:17-18 NRSV). Jethro's solution for the worn-thin leader was to recommend a disbursed leadership model built on the character and capacity of other leaders. Jethro told Moses, "Build a high-trust, high-character, high-capacity team to lead and manage the needs of the people." Moses wisely heeded the caution and advice of Jethro.

In Chapter Three, "Historical Foundation – John Wesley and the People Called Methodists," the focus is the leadership skill of team building championed by the early Methodist movement and especially John Wesley. The wisdom of discovering, developing, and deploying a diverse group of women and men to be "lay preachers" was indeed strategic and fruitful for Wesley, and the people called Methodists. This diverse leadership pool resulted from the dogged commitment of the early Methodist movement to entire sanctification. The "bullseye" of the Methodist movement was not "justification by faith" but "sanctification." He focused on not just "more" followers of Jesus (salvation/evangelism) but "maturing" followers of Jesus (sanctification/formation).

Wesley aimed at leading a movement of people, regardless of gender, religious pedigree, socioeconomics, or ethnicity, who grew in holiness of heart and life. He believed that every follower of Jesus had the capacity and contribution to bring to the Kingdom of God that was coming "on earth as it is in heaven." He held to a theology and practice of what could be called "the priesthood of believers on steroids." The movement he led sought to release potential in every follower of Jesus in the Methodist system, whether the person was a chambermaid or a member of Parliament. This work of awakening souls to God was the common work of all of God's people, not just

credentialed work of some of God's people. In early Methodism, everyone was encouraged to engage in the work of Kingdom expansion. This subtle yet powerful shift in focus was the genius of the movement.

The focus of Chapter Four, "Theological Foundation – Perichoresis: The Trinity as Team," is on the beautiful theological concept of God as Trinity. The Triune God, living in the unity and diversity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, foreshadows and captures the unity and diversity of healthy and holy teams doing Kingdom work on behalf of the Triune God as they live in God. Theologians often describe perichoresis as the "circle dance" of the Trinity as they attempt to describe the mysterious "choreography" between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as our invitation to the "dance."

The richness of perichoresis and its implications for the church are endless. The invitation to live in unity expressed through diversity becomes a part of the living witness of God's people. The tension between individuality and community in the Body of Christ finds resolution in our perichoretic deference to the other. The perichoretic nature of the Trinity affirms a synergistic relationship between different forms of church as it holds together unity and diversity. The Church in her diverse expressions, from Christians gathering in the Gothic cathedrals of Europe to those meeting under the mango trees of South America, from Christ followers attracted to contemporary worship centers with flashing lights, and smoke of the megachurch to the inked who gather in the tattoo shop are genuinely the Church when these gathered followers of Jesus live life together perichoretically.

In Chapter Five, "Interdisciplinary Foundation: Building Teams to Solve Adaptive Challenges," adaptive leadership theory is harnessed for support. Dr. Ronald

Heifetz and Marty Linsky introduced adaptive leadership at Harvard University. They have championed that teams that practice adaptive leadership can address tough organizational challenges, or what they call “swamp issues,” and flourish.

Leaders of teams with adaptive capacity are steered by women and men who embody the driving principles of adaptive leadership. These team leaders guide their teams to distinguish between technical problems and adaptive challenges. They practice cultivating organizational awareness by traveling between the “dance floor,” where the work is done, and the “balcony,” where there is perspective to observe the work. Growing in adaptive capacity is essential for teams to become generative.

In Chapter Six, “Project Analysis,” the findings of a six-week seminar entitled “Building Generative Teams” are described. The Campus Pastors chose six emerging leaders from the three campuses of Grace Church to participate in the seminar, which involved attending the six sessions, taking a pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaire, weekly focused journaling exercises, and an in-depth individual focused interview. These were the three data points upon which the findings were based.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

My conscious journey with Jesus began in the Fall of 1977 when a thirty-something-year old Campus Crusade for Christ Area Director named John courageously stepped onto the Oak Ridge High School campus in Orlando, Florida. Like Jesus, whom Eugene Peterson described as the One who "…moved into the neighborhood…" (Jn 1:14, The Message), John "moved" into my life. He "pitched his tent" and "tabernacle" in my mixed-up world of addictions, afflictions, and compulsive behaviors, as well as my Kingdom possibility and potential. He incarnated the Good News of Jesus for me. This meant John risked stepping into my world and not just inviting me into his. Instead, he preveniently engaged with me. In the words of Michael Frost, like Jesus, John "…waded into the shit and piss…" of my life.[1]

In those early days, I learned in my wanderings and wonderings of faith with John that the Gospel was both "good" and "news." I was captivated by the thought that the God of creation cared for me and had plans and purposes for my life. This was and still is "good" for me. But, as a person detached from any meaningful faith or community of faith, it was also "news." Before John's incarnational presence entered into my life, I was

[1] "Michael Frost- Ambition 15 | InterVarsity," YouTube, January 21, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9eL2YL2kEY&t=999s

clueless about the reality of God's love for me. It was also "news." As Charles Wesley described, I was "…lost in wonder, love, and praise."[2] Following Jesus was a blissful awakening.

Two years later, called by God to vocational ministry and a freshman at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky, I would settle on 1 Thes 2:8 (NLT) as my "life verse:" "We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too." As Paul describes his ministry here, the sharing of the Good News was, for me, an incarnational experience of both "nearness and "dearness." John embodied the Good News through his nearness to me and what emerged was a "dearness" with one another. They were inseparable. His love for me, expressed through his engagement in my life became the conduit for the transformation of my life, that only the death, burial and, resurrection of Jesus can bring to a human. Following Jesus did then and continues now to be an embodied experience for me. Thus, when I began ministry, embedded in my spiritual DNA was a commitment to an incarnational ministry of nearness and dearness, proximity and preciousness. This incarnational approach to ministry has driven me in my thirty-seven years of full-time vocational ministry as well as the last twenty-six years as Lead Pastor at Grace Church.

This paper will explore how this kind of incarnational ministry and leadership requires the lifelong sanctifying journey of inner transformation for a spiritual leader. The type of leadership transformation that I will propose is from a "heroic solo leader" to a "generative team leader." As Paul describes the sanctifying work of the Lord in followers of Jesus as those who "…are being transformed into the same image from one degree of

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[2] Charles Wesley, writer, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," in Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, 1747)

glory to another…," (2 Cor 3:18, NRSV), incarnational spiritual leaders can make, if they choose, a similar ongoing revolutionary journey in their leadership. This is the humble road of self-emptying and submission. It is also the meek path of intentional mentoring, pushing younger and newer leaders to the forefront to build generative capacity. This is counter-intuitive to the heroic solo leader so popular in our culture. And I would dare say it is the road less traveled in our culture of celebrity and fame that sadly infects the Body of Christ, especially in Europe and North America.

I was well-equipped to grow and lead a vital local church for the first ten of my twenty-six years at Grace Church,. From my theological training to twelve years of remarkable mentoring by extraordinary senior leaders, my ministry toolbelt was sufficient for the day-to-day challenges of growing a church. And we did. From less than 400 people in worship to more than 2,000 in six years, our church was doing well by any standards. I took as my guide the heroic solo leader playbook. Remarkable leaders like Rick Warren and Bill Hybels became my mentors from afar. I'd read three books on leadership for every one book on soul care in those early days at Grace Church. Translating their work into my context seemed easy. And we grew unprecedently. But by year ten at Grace Church, I hit my leadership lid. I could no longer spin any more plates. My dirty little secret was that I was exhausted, and the ministry was not sustainable. Our discipleship was thin. We were making lots of converts and a few disciples. And I was ready to leave. In the words of Alcoholics Anonymous, I hit my bottom.

Preveniently, God brought one of my spiritual sons, Wes Olds, to be a pastor at Grace Church, who introduced me to a new way of leading that I describe as generative

team leadership. Later in this paper, I will give details as to how God used Wes and Spiritual Leadership, Inc. to change my leadership trajectory.

In the last sixteen years, I have been on and continue on this journey from heroic, solo leader to generative team leader. I went from forty-two staff reporting directly to me to three. My personal and spiritual life is well. Our church is healthy and vital, making more and better disciples. Now I read one book on leadership for every three books on soul care.

It seems that leaders, especially North American and European leaders, are caught up in the cult of heroic solo leadership and the accompanying attractional form of ministry. I embodied this. The result has often been one-generation organizations, crash-and-burn leaders, disenchanted followers, and a tarnished witness to an unbelieving world. The nature of the Trinity and the ministry of Jesus, Paul, and John Wesley, do not support heroic solo leadership but instead point to a healthier and holier way, the way of the generative team leadership. I will address is this problem: Heroic solo leadership leads to a lack of congregational sustainability and vitality. I will propose is this solution: Building a generative team leads to congregational sustainability and vitality. My research will focus on exploring the theology, the history, the practices, and the processes for creating a culture of healthy, generative team-based leadership.

Context

Cape Coral's history began with two brothers, Leonard and Jack Rosen, who had a dream of transforming the nearly 120 square miles of marshland into a waterfront paradise. The Rosen's bought the land for $678,000, and the work of Gulf America Land

Corporation began. Having visited Fort Lauderdale and seeing all the canal front homes, the Rosen's hired teams of men to battle the heat, vegetation, and snakes to dig out over 400 miles of Cape Coral canals. As a Cape Coral tourism website documented, "Canals were dug out with dredges, and the earth was used to build up the land to the required elevation of 5' 6" above sea level. So many canals and lakes were put in that Gulf American never had to buy fill dirt."[3]

By 1978 when the young Rev. David Kelley arrived in Southwest Florida, Cape Coral had grown to 25,000 residents, and a new United Methodist congregation was planted in the north/south mid-point of the vast city land mass. Three building projects were completed during Dr. Kelley's fifteen years at Grace Church. First, an initial multi-purpose space with a fellowship hall, kitchen, lobby, bathrooms, and offices was built in 1980. Second, a lobby extension and nine classrooms were built in 1986. Finally, a 600-seat sanctuary was completed in 1991.

In 2005, the 18,000-square-foot Children's and Youth Center (today called the Family Center) was completed to house a large and growing preschool, children's ministry, and youth ministry. In 2007, the Cape Coral campus of Grace Church took a huge leap and purchased a stand-alone, 57,000 square foot, eight-and-a-half acre former Winn-Dixie grocery store property for $5.2 million. This became Grace Church's best expression of community outreach for ten years, housing more than forty ministries, including a thrift store and a community garden. This space was called the Grace Community Center (GCC). A 10:00 a.m. Sunday Worship was also begun. A "Third Saturday" outreach, during which the church provided food, prayer, worship, haircuts,

[3] "Cape Coral History." Come to Cape Coral. Accessed November 18, 2020. http://www.come-to-cape-coral.com/cape-coral-history.html.

and fellowship for under-served community members, and Exceptional Entrepreneurs, a unique day program for Special Needs adults, was housed in this space. In the ten years that Grace Church owned the GCC, and by the grace of God and the efforts of thousands of volunteers, they served more than 278,000 of their neighbors. Sadly, the great recession eroded the church's capacity to financially maintain this ministry, and we sold the building in 2017.

Cape Coral is one of the fastest-growing communities in America. The U.S. Census reported "The Cape Coral-Fort Myers area was ranked number seven for top metropolitan areas in percentage growth from 2010 to 2018 with 22% growth over that period."[4] According to World Population Review,[5] Cape Coral has dramatically grown in population from 1,500 residents in 1960 to 199,500 in 2020, as seen below in Figure 1. The Grace Church, Cape Coral campus is located in the heart of this high-growth area. Our location demands that Grace Church be better equipped for cultivating a generative ministry for disciple-making, leadership development, and the establishment of multiplying faith communities.

[4] Jarvis, Sarah. "Census Report: Cape Coral-Fort Myers Metro Area among Fastest Growing in the Country." Press. April 19, 2019. http://www.news-press.com/story/news/2019/04/18/census-cape-coral-fort-myers-area-among-fastest-growing-nation/3507765002/.

[5] "Cape Coral, Florida Population 2020." Cape Coral, Florida Population 2020 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). http://www.worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/cape-coral-fl-population.

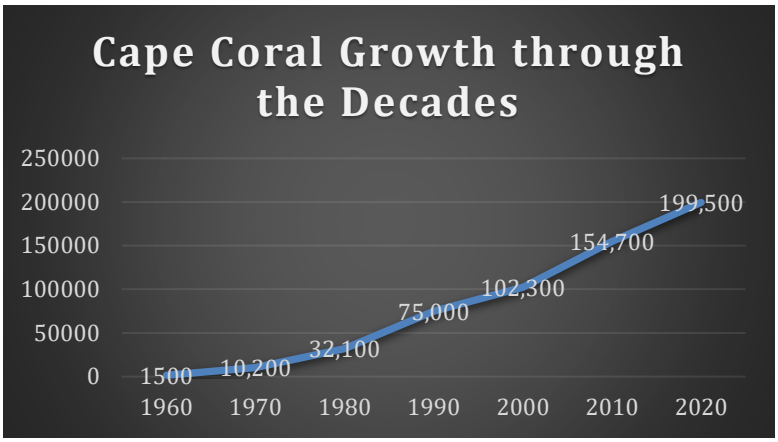

Figure 1: Cape Coral Population Growth

Two studies were done to establish a baseline for the demographic difference between the Cape Coral campus of Grace Church and the surrounding community. First, using the resources of MissionInsite, a polygon demographics study of roughly a three miles radius on the Grace Church, Cape Coral campus was gathered (see Figure 2). [6] Because this campus is sandwiched between the Caloosahatchee River on the East and the Gulf of Mexico on the west, a simple circular radius study would not be helpful or accurate regarding the congregational reach. There is a common folklore in the Cape Coral church community that the bridge over the river to Fort Myers, though only a mile or so in length, is more like a hundred miles long. The bottom line is that people seldom cross the three bridges into Cape Coral for church. This study encompasses the central and northern parts of Cape Coral and some of North Fort Myers.

[6] MissionInsite by ACS Technologies, https://missioninsite.com/.

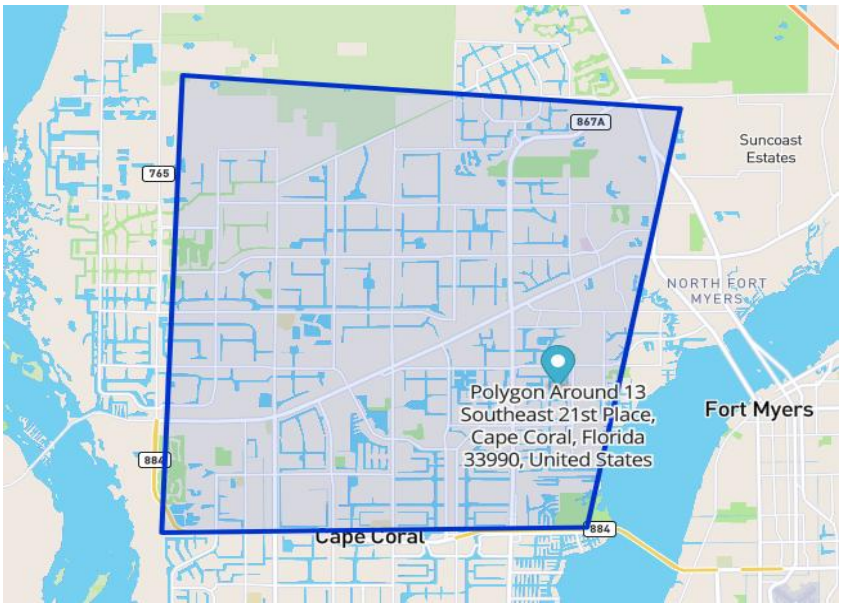

Figure 2: Cape Coral Map

Second, to get up-to-date and accurate demographic information from the Cape Coral campus, a seven-question survey was emailed to 3,847 email addresses on the campus email list. Three hundred and ninety-two people responded to the seven questions in the survey (10.1%). This data was used to help compare the church's demographics with the surrounding community.

While this survey was informative, it presents some challenges. The difficulty lies in that the findings of the church survey, though extensive in response (10.1%), do not reflect the reality of the church. Based on observation, the church is younger, less educated, more racially diverse (but by no means multi-ethnic), and less affluent than the survey indicated. There is a "gap" between our community and church in these areas. Our "inside" (Grace Church, Cape Coral campus) does not look like our "outside" (the Cape Coral/North Fort Myers community), yet an unknown calculation remains: How wide is the gap?

It will take a team tasked with answering this question and addressing the adaptive challenge to let the "inside" look like the "outside." This team must be led by a generative team leader who builds a healthy team to tackle this contextual difference. Heroic solo leadership with its command and control style will not suffice to carefully consider the contextual possibilities and challenges, establish the congregational focus to address these, launch healthy and holy systems and build the team structures to do the work and continuously get better at the work. Again, it takes a generative team.

Unique to Grace Church is also the adaptive challenge of succession to the next Lead Pastor. On August 31, 2023, after twenty-seven years, I will be stepping down as the Lead Pastor of Grace Church. Effective July 1, 2021, Wes Olds has been appointed by Bishop Ken Carter as the Co-Lead Pastor of Grace Church with me. For two years, I will hand-off senior leadership to Wes. Most large church, long-time senior leadership successions do not do well. In a 2015 survey co-sponsored by Leadership Network, large churches (weekly attendance of 1,000 and higher) were asked: "How would you rate efforts at planning for the senior pastor's eventual succession from this church relative to where you feel that planning should be at this point?" A surprising 44% rate their succession preparation as either "poor" or "fair"—the bottom two choices out of five total options. Only 8% picked the top choice of "outstanding."[7] We want to be a part of the 8% who do this hand-off well.

Ministry Journey

[7] Warren Bird. "Succession Readiness: Surveying The Landscape of Large Church Pastors." Leadership Network. August 4, 2015. https://leadnet.org/succession-readiness-surveying-the-landscape-of-large-church-pastors/.

All of my “up close” ministry mentors were heroic solo leaders who honestly came by their leadership style. From my first pastor at my home church to my first “boss” pastor in seminary to the two Senior Pastor on whose staff I served before coming to Grace Church, each of these three extraordinary men and one remarkable woman were unknowingly shaped by their training and our cultures “command and control” approach to leading. So as I stepped into senior leadership responsibilities in September of 1996, I instinctually modeled what my mentors had modeled for me.

Take, for example, my first pastor. In June of 1978, five months after becoming a Christian, I walked into Pine Castle United Methodist Church, and I was home. Pine Castle was led by Rev. Clarence Yates, a larger-than-life preacher. Large in stature with a deep baritone voice and a very sharp mind, Pastor Yates was “a prince of preachers.” He did not stand behind a pulpit but instead, read scripture from a Bible, laid it down on the communion table, and then brilliantly preached a practical and biblical message from memory. I later learned that he had a photographic memory and preached three Sunday services identically. I was mesmerized by him.

Pastor Yates was charismatic in theology and practice. Like John Wesley and the early Methodists, he was considered an “enthusiast” because he believed in and practiced “experiential religion.” Yet, Pastor Yates also believed in order. Our services were joyful and alive but crafted. With a robed choir and pastors, worship was a mix of Gospel hymns and Maranatha praise choruses. Hands were lifted in joyful worship and shouts of “amen” and “hallelujah” were typical. After Pastor Yates’ messages, he opened the altar, and people flooded down to cry out to God. Small groups gathered around the penitent, the diseased, the hurting and the lonely and laid hands on them, often anointing them

with oil. New life in Jesus was birthed in this sacred place. These practices shaped my life as well as the methods of my ministry.

The gifts of the Spirit were welcome but in an orderly fashion. “Words” were checked by leaders before being shared. I never recall anyone speaking in tongues or being “slain in the Spirit” publicly. Pastor Yates taught us that “the Gift” of the Spirit was more important than the “gifts” of the Spirit.” He was indeed a Wesleyan charismatic, and his teaching and ministry profoundly shaped my life.

Yet, despite all his giftedness, Pastor Yates’s leadership style was corporate and distant, reflecting the marketplace culture. He was the CEO of a large and growing spiritual enterprise. He was withdrawn from the congregation, spending hours locked away in his home or church office. Please hear me. He was a good and faithful pastor who married, buried, and baptized, but he was not engaged in the developing healthy teams.

Most of my “far away” ministry mentors were also heroic solo leaders. From their books that I bought and read to their conferences that I attended and dutifully filled in all the blanks in the conference workbook (I am an enneagram three with enneagram one propensities, mind you), for the most part, heroic solo leadership was their primary leadership philosophy. For example, from 2006 to 2017, Grace Church was a premier host site for the Willow Creek Association’s Global Leadership Summit. One of the perks of being a host site was being invited to pre-conference and post-conference events hosted by the Willow Creek Association. This was an awesome privilege to get a “backstage pass” to all things Willow Creek. Access to Bill Hybels was generous. Entry

to the systems, structures, and resources of the Church and the Association was at your fingertips.

At each of these gatherings, there would be extended time for senior leaders of host churches to ask Bill Hybels questions. Without fail, the one issue that constantly arose was the adaptive challenge of leading staff. Regardless of the "topic" of conversation, it always seemed to evolve to the anxiety and angst that senior church leaders were having with their teams. Why is this a common denominator for senior leaders in the church? Is everyone's staff dysfunctional? Could it be that it is not so much about staff but how staff are led? I believe so.

Throughout my sixty-two years of life, I have experienced many conversions, but three rise to the top. My first was my conversion from sin, self, and Satan to Jesus, which began in my parent's living room in January of 1978. My second conversion involved the Church (big C) of Christ. Sometime in early the 1990s, while serving at Christ Church in Fort Lauderdale, the Holy Spirit confronted me on my disdain for the Church. I was one of those throwing rotten tomatoes at the Bride of Christ. In those days, I began to experience the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ, and read what the Bible says about the value of the Church. My ecclesiology blossomed and continues to grow even today.

My third conversion began in 2006. I had been at Grace Church for ten years when my "Timothy," the Rev. Wes Olds, joined the Grace Church team. Wes is the eldest son of Howard Olds, my Senior Pastor at Trinity Hill UMC, where I served during seminary. He had been in my youth group there, served as a summer youth intern at First United Methodist Church, Kissimmee, for three summers, and served with me at Christ

Church, Fort Lauderdale as the Youth Pastor. This would be our fourth church together. That summer, I threw him the keys to the church and said, “I’m exhausted. I’m taking a month off. Don’t call me unless the church burns down.”

A month later, I returned and met for our debriefing meeting. Wes’ opening salvo was, “How in the hell have you done this all these years? Every decision in the church comes to your desk.” And for the next hour, Wes lovingly berated me. But like a loving and trusted friend, he also began to ask me questions about the future. “What do you want the next ten years of your ministry at Grace Church to be about?” he asked. From deep within, a Spirit-inspired impulse arose. “I want to stay here at Grace Church with you and make this place even more vital, and I even want to influence our denomination for local church vitality,” I responded. “Will you trust me to help you?” Wes said. “Of course.” And thus, began my third conversion from a heroic solo leader to a generative team leader. Here’s what that means.

Through training and observation, I learned that leadership was a solo act. I had learned and watched great leaders who had the vision of Moses, the courage of Esther, the passion of Paul, and the obedience of Mary. My pastoral heroes were women and men of high integrity who led masterfully and made bold decisions for the organizations they led. For the most part, they did this alone. I learned from my mentors that the leader’s car was the first in the parking lot in the morning and the last to leave in the evening. So, my impulse had been to lead heroically for more than twenty years. Most days, it was not about me, so I felt okay. The result was that by year ten, I was burning out. I thought of leaving Grace Church, even though things were going great. I had been elected the first delegate for our denomination’s General Conference, and the possibility

of being a Bishop in our church seemed appealing even though I do not have the temperament for this kind of ministry.

Wes introduced me and our church to the ministry of Spiritual Leadership, Inc (SLI). SLI taught me how to be a spiritual leader who builds teams of women and men who together cultivate transformational cultures and build fruitful processes. In 2006, I took my first steps away from heroic leadership and began the lifelong journey of building generative teams. Over the past sixteen years, my passion for God, love for the church, and commitment to my teams have grown exponentially.

In this journey to becoming a generative team leader, the Holy Spirit has taught me three prayers that have fueled and continue to fuel my pilgrimage. Each prayer is rooted in a Greek word from three verses in the New Testament. The first is the "kenosis prayer." Kenosis is the Greek word for "emptied" found in Phil 2:5-7a (NASB). Paul writes, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself…" Paul invites followers of Jesus to have the temperament that Jesus did. It's an attitude or mindset of being poured out for the sake of others. So regularly, I have to pray, "Lord, empty me. Pour me out for your glory and the good of others."

The second prayer is the "hupotasso prayer." This Greek word is in Paul's treatise on Spirit-filled living and relationships in Ephesians 5. He teaches a broad relational principle in Eph 5:21 (NLT) when he writes, "And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." The word translated "submit" is the Greek word "hupotasso" which means "to place under." Out of holy awe and reverence (fear in some translations), I am urged as a follower of Jesus in my relationships to place what I want and even need

underneath what others want and need. This reflects Jesus' calling to his disciples in Lk 9:23-24 (NIV), "Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it."

The third prayer that the Holy Spirit has taught me to pray is the "parathou prayer." This prayer is about heritage and legacy. It's when I pray, "Lord, would you allow me to raise up a generation of women and men who passionately serve you and your purposes on the earth?" This Greek word is found in Paul's admonition to Timothy, the pastor in Ephesus. In 2 Tm 2:2 (NIV), Paul encourages the young leader, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

These three prayers have been gifts of God's sanctifying grace at work in and through me. The result has been that my life is increasingly more whole, our ministry is growing healthier and, our community is being reached more consistently. Grace abounds all around. These prayers will be the fodder for my project.

Develop the Synergy

Many people in my community mark the beginning of the City of Cape Coral as 1960 though, in actuality, it began a few years earlier. That year, 1500 brave people lived in the one hundred square miles of land bordering the Caloosahatchee River and the Gulf of Mexico. By 2020, Cape Coral had grown by 133 times the 1960 population of 1500 to 199,500. That's quite a growth curve over sixty years!

Our city has gone through fabulous yet often painful growth pains. The infrastructure of our city (water, sewer, parks, roads) has struggled to keep up with the demands of an ever-increasing constituency. Our city leaders have valiantly tried to plan for the waves of new residents that move to our Southwest Florida paradise, but it has been hard work.

Like the City of Cape Coral, I was born in 1960. By the grace of God, I too, have grown. Measuring my growth is more complex than calculating the development of our city's population. Like our city, my "infrastructure" has been challenged by the growth of the congregation and community. The demands of leadership in our high-growth context have been a journey of inner and outer world transformation. From my communion with God to my communication skills with my colleagues, this has been my leadership adaptive challenge for each year of my twenty-six years at Grace Church. At a macro level, I call this journey of growth my pilgrimage from heroic solo leader to generative team leader. Cape Coral (my context) and Jorge Acevedo (my autobiography) have shared a mutual sixty plus years transformation.

It's my deep desire to do a deep dive into this style of leadership that I have been calling "heroic solo leadership." I want to consider how often this style of leadership leads to a lack of congregational sustainability and vitality. I will consider the inner and outer world skills necessary for a local church to journey from heroic solo leadership to generative team leadership. I will also reflect on how this style of heroic solo leadership is unhealthy and unsustainable for the local church.

Recently, the Holy Spirit gave me a new insight to describe the difference between heroic solo leadership and generative team leadership. The principle is "Your

pronouns give you away." When listening to any leader, do you hear more "me" or more "we?" In my own life, as I speak and write, I have to be keenly aware of my pronouns because they often point to deeper issues of unhealed emotions. I plan to address these in this project as well.

The solution I will propose is the slow, intentional and consistent work of building a generative team by a local church. Generative teams can discern context, establish focus, create systems for disciple-making, leadership development, and generative community advancement. They also know how to get better at all of this.

Conclusion

My project will attempt to describe the nature of heroic solo leadership in the Church and how this leadership style is unsustainable and leads to a lack of congregational sustainability. My greatest desire for this project is that it will help the next generation of spiritual leaders, both clergy and laity, to further the movement of Jesus through a healthy, holy, and sustainable leadership style. Helping church leaders build multiplying teams with high trust, contextual intelligence, clear focus, fruitful systems and structures, and the capacity to continually get better at their work is the highest aspiration of this project.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The amount of literature on the subject of leadership has grown exponentially in the last several decades. Leadership as a genre has also found a home in the Christian Church. From popular books to scholarly tomes, the subject of leadership in the Church has taken on a life of its own. Associations, alliances, and conferences have emerged to help facilitate better leadership in the Church. In significant part, it is because the Bible is filled with a diverse cadre of women and men with remarkable leadership acumen who have taken the lead through various and complex circumstances while remaining faithful to God and God's mission in the world.

What is not to love about the faith of Abraham or Ruth? Does the integrity of Joseph or Daniel not stir us? Are we not inspired by the courage of Esther or Paul and challenged by the obedience of Moses or Mary? These women and men are faithful examples of what it means to live and lead well. Yet, the idea of shared leadership is often lost in the leadership lessons learned from these noteworthy individuals. Instead, much of the scholarship and literature surrounding leadership in the Christian faith focuses on leadership as a solo task.

What is often missed in the scriptures we examine is the subtle yet clear witness of shared leadership in the Bible. For example, Adam had Eve, Moses had Joshua, Ruth

had Naomi, David had Jonathan, Elijah had Elisha, Mary had Elizabeth, Jesus had the Twelve disciples and a small host of women supporters, and Paul had a laundry list of ministry partners.

The focus of this biblical foundations paper will be on Ex 18:13-27. This pericope recounts an exchange between Moses, Yahweh's designated leader to guide the Hebrews from enslavement in Egypt to the Promised Land, and his father-in-law, Jethro. This story is a solid biblical affirmation of shared leadership and the wisdom and efficiency of building generative teams.

Background to the Book of Exodus

In his introduction to the Book of Exodus, Walter Brueggemann exegetes this ancient book from the Bible:

> Scholarly niceties are not unimportant but must, in the end, be mobilized for our own work of contemporary interpretation. The book of Exodus is now, for us in our reading, set down in a context of profane, self-indulgent consumer culture, in which technological capacity is matched and mobilized by self-serving ideology. In such a culture (either in market-driven licentiousness or in state-practice brutality), human beings, human community, and human possibility are increasingly neglected and muted, if not nullified. In such a culture, the voice of Exodus sounds where it has courageous interpreters, who simply and uncompromisingly voice the alternative intention the Holy One has for creation.
>
> The dramatic rendition of liberation takes place in a society where the question of liberation is a little honored. Ours is increasingly a shutdown culture in which "freedom" is reduced to a range of product choices, but in which the soaring of the human spirit, the dignity of the human body, and the health of the body politic are little cared for, honored, or financed. The question posed by the exodus tradition is whether a liberation is possible in such a shutdown world. The answer given by this Jewish voice of God is God's own will to end the bondage status of the marginalized is relentless and cannot finally be resisted.[1]

[1] Walter Brueggemann, et.al., *The New Interpreter's Bible, v. I: General Articles on the Bible, General Articles on the New Testament, The Book of Genesis, The Book of Exodus*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 685.

This represents both the challenge and the opportunity that arises when interpreting the second book of the Torah. It is a book of deliverance, liberation, and redemption amid excruciating suffering, and it holds vast implications for our contemporary world that is seen through similar forces of bondage and enslavement for both individuals and society. The Book of Exodus has a unique place in the canon as it foreshadows the redemptive life and ministry of Jesus. John Durham reminds us, "No other biblical book surfaces elsewhere in the OT as frequently as the Book of Exodus does; in the NT only, the Books of Psalms and Isaiah are cited more, and that for the fairly obvious reasons of liturgy and messianism."[2]

The main human character in Exodus is Moses, who spent forty years as a "third culture kid," having been raised in the palace of the wealthy and powerful ruling class of Egyptians while experiencing the nurture of his Hebrew mother and sister (Ex 2:1-10). [3] Moses was at first a "rejected rescuer" who, at the age of forty, killed an Egyptian soldier defending a Hebrew slave (Ex 2:11-15a). His mission of rescue was honorable, but this method of recovery was not. Moses then spent forty years in the wilderness as a renegade, tending the sheep of a Midianite (Ex 2:15b-22). In summary, Moses spent from birth to age forty in the Egyptian palace, from ages forty to eighty in the wilderness, and from ages eighty to 120 leading the Hebrew people. Ironically, one could argue that his most "productive" years were seen in the last third of his life.

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[2] John I. Durham, *Exodus*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 27.

[3] "Third culture kid (TCK) was a concept introduced by sociologist and anthropologist Ruth Hill Useem to describe children who spent part of their developmental years in a foreign culture due to their parents working abroad. Third Culture Kids include military brats, missionary kids, diplomatic kids, and business kids.

In describing the narrative in the Book of Exodus, Walter Houston correctly reminds readers that God is the primary character of the story of the freeing of the Hebrew slaves but that Moses plays the central role of arbitrator. He writes:

> YHWH is the dominant character. The text underlines his sovereignty even at the expense of the interest of the story in places. Although the Israelites are essential to the story, they rarely act independently. Between the two stands Moses. He can be described as the hero of the story. He is hardly ever off-stage from the moment of his birth; the story alternates constantly between scenes between Moses and YHWH and scenes between Moses and the Israelites or Pharaoh. Yet even he, throughout the greater part of the story, acts simply as YHWH's agent, and it is only in places that he asserts his independence (Ex 32 is a notable example). [4]

Moses' "priestly" role to the Hebrews and "prophetic" role to the Egyptians, combined with his unique relationship with Yahweh, gave him a distinctive leadership experience. Moses' "defining moment" in leadership came when he had an encounter with God while tending sheep at Mount Horeb (Ex 3:1-22). Yahweh calls Moses, the "third culture kid," to return to Egypt and lead the deliverance of the Hebrews from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. Then, Moses is used by Yahweh to forge the rescue from slavery and lead the people into the wilderness, which brought about leadership challenges to Moses. The pericope explored in this paper is Ex 18:13-27, which takes place when recently freed Hebrew slaves were wandering in the wilderness.

This story elaborates on Jethro's role in confronting his son-in-law Moses' leadership style and structure. Neither his unsustainable work ethic nor his shoddy leadership organizational structure was viewed as effective in Jethro's evaluation. In the previous 12 verses, Ex 18:1-12, Jethro, a Midianite priest, gathered his daughter and

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[4] Walter Houston, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton, and John Muddiman, (New York: Oxford University Press USA) 67.

Moses' wife, Zipporah, and their two sons to be brought to Moses. When Moses set out from Mount Horeb to Egypt after his burning bush encounter with Yahweh, Moses left his family to be cared for by Jethro. Ironically, the family reunion took place at Mount Horeb. At the reunion, Moses recounted "…everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the Lord had rescued his people from all their troubles" (Ex 18:8, NLT). Finally, in the spirit of King David's Ps 145:5-7 (NIV) centuries later, Moses declares the goodness of God:

> They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
> and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
> They tell of the power of your awesome works—
> and I will proclaim your great deeds.
> They celebrate your abundant goodness
> and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

Walter Kaiser brilliantly notes that Moses uses the name "Yahweh" when referencing God, and he emphasizes that we should "notice the clear reference to the personal and covenant name of God in deference to the generic name Elohim, which depicts God's relationship to all creation."[5] This news pleased Jethro and served as a "mini-conversion" of the syncretistic Midianite priest who declared, "I know now that the Lord is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians" (Ex 18:11, NLT). However, a day passed, and Jethro observed that Moses was overworked with both judicial and divine instructional responsibilities. His wise father-in-law evaluated Moses' problem and gave him a solution in Ex 18:13-27.

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[5] Walter C. Kaiser, *Exodus, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 412.

Two other times in the Torah, a similar narrative is recounted about Moses having his defining moment. This was his "Popeye moment." When discouraged and at the end of his rope, the cartoon character Popeye, would exasperatingly declare, "I've had all I can stand, I can't stands no more!" In all three biblical stories, Moses was in this "space" related to the weightiness of leading the Hebrews. Moses finds himself very frustrated at his job and the workload. Nm 11:11-17 (NIV) recounts Moses' leadership dilemma this way:

> He asked the Lord, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat! 'I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin." The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone."

This biblical narrative suggests that shared leadership was God's idea. In an honest conversation between Moses and God, Moses had placed the onus on God for giving him this unbearable assignment of tending to the stubborn former Egyptian slaves. Like Jethro in Ex 18, God had offered a new leadership strategy of discovering, developing, and deploying a leadership team.

In Dt 1:9-18 (NIV), Moses comes off as a CEO, who after a season of self-reflection and surveying of the freed Hebrews, discloses the organizations' new organizational chart:

> At that time, I (Moses) said to you (Hebrews), "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. The Lord your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as numerous as the stars in the sky. May the Lord, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you." You answered me, "What you propose to do is good." So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it." And at that time, I told you everything you were to do.

In this pericope, the idea of dispersed leadership comes from the mind, experience, and insight of Moses, the leader.

So, the question related to these three biblical stories is: Who was the key influence that informed Moses' idea of calling, confirming, and commissioning newer leaders to assist him in leading? Some might suggest that Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, is responsible for Moses' unique take on leadership, as he gave fatherly and wise counsel to the struggling and exhausted leader. But, Ex 33:11a (NIV) tells us, "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend." So, did God divinely "download" on Moses a shared leadership strategy, or did the now seasoned leader, with his history of leadership success and failures, initiate the development of a ministry team model on his own? Frankly, we do not know. In reality, there is a convergence of influences from within, beyond, and above. The seasoned leader seldom has "a" defining moment but a series of defining moments that come from the self, wise counsel, and divine promptings.

Last, there is a danger or at least a challenge in exegeting a historical biblical text and extracting theological and practical insights. Narratives are diverse. No one's story is

the same. Extracting timeless, transferable truth from a narrative requires a careful, thoughtful, and humble mind and heart.

Outline of Exodus 18:13-27 (NIV)

The Birthing of a Generative Team Leader

I. Moses: The Overworked, Exhausted Heroic Solo Leader

a. Moses' Leadership Problem (Ex 18:13)

> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.

b. Moses' Leadership Problem Observed and Revealed (Ex 18:14)

> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

c. Moses' Leadership Problem Rationalized (Ex 18:15-16)

> Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

II. Jethro: The Voice of Wise Correction and New Strategy

a. Jethro's Challenge to Moses' Leadership Strategy (Ex 18:17-18)

> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."

b. Jethro's Wise Counsel and New Strategy (Ex 18:19-23)

> "Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the

> simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

c. Moses' Humble Obedience (Ex 18:24-26)

> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

d. Moses and Jethro Depart (Ex 18:27)

> Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

Exegesis of Exodus 18:13-27 (NIV)

This narrative is a cautionary tale for any aspiring Church leader, whether clergy or laity. Moses' leadership style can be categorized as "heroic solo leadership" and how that way of leading was not sustainable for local church vitality. Further, Jethro advises the worn-out deliverer to delegate responsibility to others of sound character and integrity or to be a "generative team leader." Moses wisely heeded his mentor's counsel.

Verse 13: Moses' Leadership Problem

> The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.

The Hebrew word describing the judging work Moses does here is "lispot." This word is found nine times in the Old Testament. The other eight times that "lispot" is used,

it is to describe God as the Judge over his creation.[6] It is only used to describe a human as judge once, and it is here to designate Moses' task. The word means "to judge or govern."[7]

When elaborating on this role, one prominent observation is represented by the length of time Moses spent in his work as a judge. To use contemporary terms, "Moses' car was the first car to pull in the parking lot in the morning and the last car to leave in the evening." We will later discover how this way of leading was not sustainable.

Verse 14: Moses' Leadership Problem Observed and Revealed

> When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, enters the conversation, and like any effective counselor, he prompts the weary leader with questions. Walter Kaiser describes Jethro's role in this instance by elaborating on how "Jethro is depicted as an efficiency expert who wisely suggests a modification in Israel's leadership structure…"[8] Instead of laying down some fatherly counsel, he asks Moses to describe what Moses is doing and why he is executing tasks in the way he is managing them. Like any wise counselor, Jethro begins with questions for the burned out Moses instead of starting with fatherly advice. Peter Ennes writes of Jethro's visit to Moses:

> From one perspective, Jethro is returning a favor. In 2:16-20, Moses comes to Jethro's aid by driving away the shepherds from the well. Now, Jethro comes to

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[6] Exodus 18:13, 1 Kings 3:9 (twice), 1 Chronicles 16:33, Psalm 10:18, Psalm 96:13, Psalm 98:9, Joel 3:12, Obadiah 1:21.

[7] Biblehub.com/Hebrew/lishpot_8199.Htm.

[8] Kaiser, *Exodus,* 412.

> Moses' aid. It is worth noting again that both incidents are accompanied by a meal in both acts of kindness, result in making "shepherding" more effective -- for the former shepherding of a flock, for the latter the shepherding of God's people.[9]

Moses' role as a judge included staying connected to his calling in serving as a shepherd for the Hebrew people and supporting them on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Ps 77:20 (NIV) declares, "You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." How ironic that his shepherd father-in-law, who enlisted Moses to be a shepherd earlier, is now coaching Moses on how he "shepherds" God's people. Judging and shepherding went go hand in hand with Moses' leadership responsibilities.

Verses 15-16: Moses' Leadership Problem Rationalized

> Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

This text beautifully describes the institutional and spiritual responsibilities of a leader. Moses had to make legal judgments and teach God's ways to the people. Brueggemann states, "Moses is not dispensing mere practical advice or positive law, but the very Torah of God. The God of Israel cares about the concrete, day-to-day matters of justice."[10] Where the legislative and spiritual lines were drawn in Moses' responsibility was unclear. Nevertheless, the sacred and the secular blended in the life of God's people. John Durham notes, "Indeed, there is no division of civil from sacred, or profane from

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[9] Peter Ennis, *The NIV Application Commentary, Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 371.

[10] Brueggemann, *Genesis,* 827.

holy, in Israel's thought about and practice of laws of any kind."[11] "There is no distinction between divine revelation and practical wisdom: the latter is as much the will of God as the former."[12] This represents Moses' primary role as a leader. The issue Jethro was raising included contemplating how this work would get done.

Verses 17-18: Jethro's Challenge to Moses' Leadership Strategy

> Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."

Walter Brueggemann comments plainly on Moses' situation, "The problem is that Moses is overworked."[13] Like an interventionist at an addiction intervention, Jethro tells "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" to the exhausted leader. In *The African Bible Commentary*, Abel Ndjerareou notes that "Moses was acting like any patriarch or head of a large family as he settled various matters and resolved legal disputes. But this family is so large that the task is an impossible one…"[14]

Ironically, Jethro's evaluative word in Hebrew to describe Moses' work strategy as unhealthy is "tov." This word "tov" is used by God seven times in the first creation story in Genesis 1 to describe each day of his creation, "And God saw that it was good" (Gn 1:9b). By "good," the writer of Genesis does not mean simply moral goodness, but a sense of completeness. "Tov" is translated as"good" or "goodness" and is found more

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[11] Durham, *Exodus,* 420.

[12] Houston, *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, 79.

[13] Brueggemann, *Exodus,* 827.

[14] Abel Ndjerareou, *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Nairobi, Kenya: Word Alive Publishers, 2006), 108.

than 700 times in scripture. McKnight and Barringer state, "From the very first page of our Bible, 'tov' is the Bible's summary term, the 'executive virtue' for how God wants us to live."[15] Jethro emphatically tells Moses that his pace is not "tov."

The Common English translation of verse 18 reads: "You will end up totally wearing yourself out, both you and these people who are with you." Moses' leadership strategy was a lose/lose proposition, according to Jethro. Neither Moses the leader, nor the Hebrews, the ones he was leading, succeeded with his present leadership structure and strategy. This is a "dual diagnosis" for Moses and the people.

Moses' heroic solo leadership approach would ultimately destroy Moses. Contemporary people call this "burnout." Not lost in this narrative is how Moses' unsustainable work pace robbed him of his other pressing, and some would argue more critical duties. For example, "The grave consequences of this overburden was that Moses could not function constantly in his most important capacity, which was prophecy…"[16] Jethro's "better way" (v.19-23) allowed Moses to endure and the people to live in peace.

Brueggemann wisely comments this way about the "why" behind Moses' unhealthy work ethic:

> Jethro sees immediately that Moses is committed to an unworkable practice. Moses cannot handle the heavy docket. We do not know whether Moses is so concerned with control that he wants to handle all the cases himself, or if he is unreflective and has never thought about a more workable, practical system. Moses seems not to have much common sense about administrative matters. But then, such dominating figures often do not. Jethro fears for Moses that he will "burn out"; Jethro's solution is that Moses must learn to delegate.[17]

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[15] Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer, *A Church Called Tov*. (Carol Streams, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2020), 87.

[16] Melamed, Avraham, *Jethro's Advice in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish and Christian Political Thought*. Jewish Political Studies Review, Spring 1990, Vol. 2, No. 1/2 (Spring 1990), pp. 3-41. Published by: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2583417

[17] Brueggemann, *Genesis,* 827.

Psychoanalyzing Moses' motivation for leading as a heroic solo leader is a difficult task. Was he a "control freak" who just struggled to release responsibility to others? Did he not have the capacity or skills to self-reflect? Was Moses, like so many "insane" addicts, simply "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result?" Unfortunately, the text does not reveal a specific answer to any of these questions. What the text does make clear is that there is a better way for Moses to lead the people.

Verses 19-23: Jethro's Wise Counsel and New Strategy

> "Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

Jethro's sound advice to Moses starts with some divine "heat" or correction attached to it. He begins in verse 19 by invoking God's blessing if Moses obeys his directive; "…and may God be with you." This is repeated by Jethro in verse 23; "If you do this and God so commands…" Twice in this godly counsel, Jethro appeals to Moses' desire to be a faithful follower of God.

Then Jethro gives Moses a preferred future, which can be explained as a new job description. Kaiser writes, "Jethro's solution to this lengthy process, which was wearing out both people and leader (v.18), was to give Moses that portion of the work that

involves a twofold office: (1) an advocate on behalf of the people (v.19) and (2) an interpreter on behalf of God to teach the people (v.20)."[18]

A deeper dive into the Hebrew words that Jethro uses here to describe Moses' better way of leading is fascinating. Motyer explains several of the words in verses 19-23 this way:

> Here teach (zahar) is "to illuminate." The task of Moses was not to innovate but to teach the people by throwing light on what God had revealed. "Decrees" is "huqqim," a word related to "haqaq," meaning "to engrave," i.e., the word of God is unchangeable, as though engraved in rocks; "laws" is the plural of "tora," which means "teaching" and specifically, what God has taught; "show is "cause to know,: i.e., not "set an example 'but "share the truth;" "way" (derek) is regularly used of customary conduct or lifestyle, i.e. the application of truth to life; "duties" is "work," what is now to be done. In all of this Moses was in the mediating position of verse 19, bringing issues to God, bringing revelation back to the people, and the work was spiritual, not narrowly "legal." People came "to seek God" to learn of God, his will and his truth.[19]

This teaching ministry of Moses served as lofty and vital work that his Midianite father-in-law says must be done by him alone. These were Moses' priority or "big rock" assignments. Verses 19-20 are Jethro's clarifying statements about Moses' primary work.

Verses 21-22 represent the leadership plan that gave Moses the "space" to do his primary work. To put it simply, Moses needed support. Moses is charged with building a generative team to assist him in his work as a judge. His responsibility would be to discover, develop, and deploy a spiritually mature "army" of men to assist him in this crucial leadership task. These men were to have four qualities. First, they were to be "capable," meaning they had the gifts it takes to serve as judges. Second, they were to be "men who feared God," which meant they trusted God. Third, they were to be

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[18] Kaiser, *Exodus,* 413.

[19] Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 174.

"trustworthy men," suggesting they loved the truth. Last, they were to be "men who hated dishonest gain." Ennis observes, "The explicit reference to dishonest getting anticipates a common temptation of leadership, namely, bribery -- one that will rear its head repeatedly throughout Israel's history (e.g., 1 Sm. 8:3, Jer 22:7)."[20] Of these ministry partners, Durham observes, "The men thus chosen are then to be made leaders over divisions of people, specified on a numerical basis but with no further criteria, and they are to serve on a continuing basis as those to whom the people may bring their less complex problems of interpretation of the covenantal directions. When the more difficult problems come up, these leaders are to bring them to Moses for guidance, a guidance for which Moses, as the people's representative, could consult Yahweh."[21]

At a macro level, Jethro's counsel allows for justice within the community to be administered fairly and evenly throughout Israel instead of the needy people being "bottlenecked" at Moses' front door. Walter Brueggemann notes, "This text shows that Israel has a crucial concern for institution building, for the establishment of stable procedures and due process, which will make justice everywhere available and reliable."[22] J.A. Moyter comments:

> The whole tone of verses 13-27 sounds administrative and legalistic, but to leave it at that level would be to miss the point. Dt 1:9-18 should be read as a parallel - and illuminating - account, not of the setting up of lower and higher courts and of a supreme court as such, but of making arrangements were by the word of God (20, *the decrees and laws*) was made available right down to the smallest group, the extended family (*the tens*, 21), so the daily life could be ordered according to what the Lord had revealed through Moses.[23]

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[20] Ennis, *Exodus,* 372.

[21] Durham, *Exodus,* 420.

[22] Brueggemann, *Genesis,* 827.

[23] Motyer, *The Message of Exodus,* 170-171.

This new suggested structure and strategy ensured "justice for all" of God's people.

Jethro's counsel to Moses resonated with Acts 6, when the early church had its first "family disagreement." Greek-speaking widows were feeling neglected in the feeding ministry. Acts 6:2-4 (NIV) gives the resolution to this adaptive challenge for the first church leadership team:

> So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

Much like Jethro counseled Moses, the Twelve counseled the fledging movement of Jesus, in negative and positive terms. The negative aspect was that the Twelve would have to neglect their calling to "ministry of the word of God" to tend to the distribution of food, whereas the positive aspect was that there were capable people "full of the Spirit and wisdom" who were suited ideally for this work. Moses' "Yes" to being the heroic solo leader with all the judging responsibility was likewise a negative and positive admonition. Negatively, Moses was unable to do that which was most important. In what Charles Hummel called "the tyranny of the urgent,"[24] Moses could not "…be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him." But, positively, there were "…capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain," who were willing and able to serve alongside Moses to share the workload.

Verse 23 is a kind of "carrot" or preferred future offered to the weary Moses. It begins with a personal appeal. "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to

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[24] Charles Hummel, *Tyranny of the Urgent* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), Introduction.

stand the strain…" (23a). The Hebrew word for "stand" used by Jethro here is "amad." It carries with it the idea of abiding, enduring, or remaining. Jethro promises his son-in-law a "rooted" life if Moses will learn to grow "branches" by investing in newer leaders to partner with him in leading the Hebrews.

Verse 23b describes the benefit to the people; "…and all these people will go home satisfied." "Satisfied" is a bit of a "soft" translation. The word used here is the powerfully beautiful Hebrew word "shalom," which carries the idea of completeness, soundness, welfare, and peace. Moses' obedience to Jethro's new leadership structure and strategy restores "tov" to both Moses and the Hebrews. This becomes a win/win proposition. As Brueggemann suggests, "Such a system will save Moses from burnout, but more importantly, it will let the community go home in shalom, in harmony and wholeness, free of conflict, enjoying a stable, shared welfare (v.23)."[25]

Verses 24-26: Moses' Humble Obedience

> Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

Moses' heart was still receptive as he not only respectfully listened to his counsel, but also faithfully heeded his Midianite father-in-law's counsel of. Kaiser comments:

> Amazingly enough, Moses listened to his father-in-law. Bush (Exodus, 1:230) remarks, 'The great Jehovah did not disdain to permit his prophet to be taught by the wisdom and intelligence of a good man, though he was not of the

[25] Brueggemann, *Genesis,* 828.

> commonwealth of Israel. It is not a little remarkable, but the very first rudiments of the Jewish polity with us suggested by a stranger and a Midianite."[26]

In this biblical narrative, we can see an account that gets repeated again and again in the Old and New Testaments when a non-Jewish "outlier" is used to fulfill God's purposes. From Ruth to Rahab in the Old Testament to the Roman centurion and the Samaritan woman in the New Testament, God reached out to and called on non-Jews to fulfill the purposes expressed in the Bible. Peter Ennis says, "That God can use a Midianite in the special capacity should come as no surprise to those familiar with similar instances in prophetic literature (e.g., the role of Cyrus in Is 44:28; 45:1, 13)."[27] Yahweh strangely used a Midianite to challenge and correct the fatigued Hebrew leader and to further the mission of God.

In the words of Alcoholics Anonymous, Moses "hit his bottom." C.S. Lewis famously wrote, "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."[28] God made Moses' pain clear to him through the counsel of his father-in-law. To his credit, Moses submitted.

Verse 27: Moses and Jethro Depart

> Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

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[26] Kaiser, *Exodus,* 413.

[27] Ennis, *Exodus,* 372.

[28] C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain.* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2009), chap. 6, Kindle.

This is the last mention of Jethro in the Bible. Presumably, he and Moses parted ways after this critical exchange. Next on God's agenda for Moses and the Hebrew people was the trek to Mount Sinai, where Moses would receive the Ten Commandments (Ex 19-20). Could it be that the wisdom of Jethro given to Moses to share leadership responsibility created the "space" for Moses to hear from Yahweh on Mount Sinai?

Summary

From this periscope, six insights have emerged that serve this Doctor of Ministry project. They are as follows.

First, this story affirms that God needs and makes use of leaders. The Bible is filled with stories of women and men who have been called to join God in fulfilling his purposes on Earth. Moses is not the first or last biblical character to get the "tap on the shoulder" and hear God's call. Moses' imperfect life beautifully serves as a model for what God's calling might look like for other individuals who are leading imperfect lives. No matter how egalitarian we want life to be, God chooses to enlist individuals who are a part of his family on this Earth, and invite them to fulfill leadership roles. Paul lists leadership as a spiritual gift. "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is…to lead, do it diligently…" (Rom 12:6a, 8c). Moses was a leader whom God needed to carry out a specific mission.

Second, Moses illustrates that leaders have a **"**default" towards heroic solo leadership. The fall of humanity explained in Gen 3 painfully describes our human propensity towards self-will. Sin damages not only our relationship with God but also our relationship with one another. Distrust and blame result from the apple-eating incident in

the Garden and are expressed in Adam and Eve's distrust of one another. Like Adam and Eve, humans have moments where they tend to drift towards self-reliance and suspicion of others. Moses' default towards heroic solo leadership finds its roots in his fallenness. Though called by God to the task of leading the Hebrews from enslavement in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land, Moses' drift to self-reliance is understandable. Every called leader knows this proclivity.

Third, the interaction between Moses and Jethro teaches us that leaders have limits. Jethro served as an instrument of the Holy Spirit to promote self-awareness in the life of the exhausted Moses. Jethro was putting his finger on a truth that heroic solo leaders often avoid. Moses came face-to-face with his limitations. Moses served a God with unlimited power, making the limitations surrounding his power readily apparent. Moses' job was to using the hours he had to best honor God, help others, and sustain himself.

Fourth, this powerful story illustrates that leaders need catalyzing defining moments to grow. Moses did not emerge from his encounter with Yahweh at Mount Sinai's burning bush with all the leadership tools he needed to lead the stubborn Hebrew people. Leadership was and is "a real-time" experience. A preacher once asked the question to a crowd of local church pastors, "Is your clay still moist? For Moses, the answer to this question was "Yes." This exchange with his father-in-law illustrates that Moses was a "learning leader." Leaders with moist clay are open to promptings of the Spirit even when they come from Midianites.

Fifth, this pericope illustrates that shared leadership gives **"**tov" to leaders and the organizations they lead. Jethro did not only point out the current reality of Moses'

unsustainable leadership structure and strategy, but he also wisely pointed to a preferred future. Moses' preferred future was to carefully build a team of "…capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves." The concept of shared leadership was in Moses' preferred future. The result was goodness or "tov" for the Moses and the people. This was true then and is true now.

Sixth, Moses illustrates that leaders get to choose again and again whether they will be humble and teachable. Defining moments like the one Moses had with Jethro created an opportunity for transformation. Moses did have free will to choose to obey. In other circumstances, Moses' clay was hardened, like when he struck the rock that God had instructed him to speak to (Nm 20:1-13). This teaches again that leadership is a real-" time" experience. Yesterday's obedience has a "shelf life" and expires quickly.

This passage informs this Doctor of Ministry project because it beautifully illustrates a dilemma for contemporary church leaders. How can one lead without becoming a heroic solo leader? Unfortunately, many leaders are caught up in this leadership style. The result is disastrous for the leader and the church.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In his best-selling, self-help book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,* Stephen Covey championed the idea that highly effective people "begin with the end in mind."[1] This habit charges a person to carefully think about the kind of person they want to be at the end of their life and then begin to order their life after that aspirational goal. One of the exercises Covey recommends for the want-to-be highly effective person is to imagine what they want the people who love them most to say about them at their funeral, and then begin to live their life with this end in mind.

Whether the Reverend John Wesley intentionally lived by this highly effective habit is unknown, but upon his death, these profound words were chosen to eulogized and memorialize the son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley:

> To the memory of the venerable
> John Wesley, A.M., late fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.
> This great light arose (by the singular providence of God) to enlighten these nations, and to revive, enforce, and defend, the pure apostolic doctrines and practices of the primitive church:
> which he continued to do, both by his writings and his labours for more than half a century:
> And to his inexpressible joy, not only, beheld their influence extending, and their efficacy witness'd in the hearts and lives of many thousands, as well in the western world as in these kingdoms:

[1] Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 109.

> But also, far above all human power of expectation, liv'd to see provision made by the singular grace of God, for their continuance and establishment to the joy of future generations...[2]

This is not hyperbole or inflation. The spark that began at Susanna and Samuel's Epworth parsonage started a fire of revival that indeed extended to "future generations." This was and is John Wesley's legacy.

In an article entitled "John Wesley: Methodical Pietist," an excellent summary of the life of Mr. Wesley ended with these words about the movement he led and the results he got by the time of his death:

> An indication of his organizational genius, we know exactly how many followers Wesley had when he died: 294 preachers, 71,668 British members, 19 missionaries (5 in mission stations), and 43,265 American members with 198 preachers.[3]

It is quite impressive that John Wesley, the father of the Methodist movement, had nearly 115,000 people in the disciple-making ministry of the Methodists at the end of his life. This is beginning with the end in mind. It is evident that he could never have built this organic, evangelistic disciple-making ministry alone. The image of Mr. Wesley setting out to field preach on his horse alone is mythology. It took an apostolic band of women and men who partnered with him in reforming the nation and the church. This early Methodist movement was so generative that it "jumped the pond" and continued in the newly established land of America.

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[2] "What We Can Learn from the Words on John Wesley's Tomb," *The United Methodist Church*, February 22, 2017. https://www.umc.org/en/content/what-we-can-learn-from-the-words-on-john-wesleys-tomb.

[3] "John Wesley Methodical Pietist." *Christianity Today*. https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/denominationalfounders/john-wesley.html.

This historical foundations paper will focus on discovering why, when, and how John Wesley and his companions built teams that became generative. Mr. Wesley believed in the Protestant doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" as he and his fellow Methodists discovered, developed, and deployed an army of nonordained leaders to guide the movement. Dr. D. Michael Henderson wrote of this:

> While it may be true that "every great institution is but the length and shadow of a great man," Methodism owed as much to its lay leaders as it did to its founder. However, his willingness to share the leadership and delegate responsibility is as much a credit to him as if he had led the movement single-handedly. Wesley was no *prima donna*; he was always a team leader, and he modeled for his colleagues a collaborative style of directing and decision making.[4]

This capacity to call, cultivate and commission women and men to join him in spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land was a part of his organizational genius.

One of the themes that will be explored is the formative elements of John Wesley growing up in the Epworth Rectory and especially his relationship with his mother, Susanna. From her stringent educational standards to her thorough religious nurturing to her "fresh expression of church" in her kitchen, Susanna's modeling influence in many ways set the trajectory of John's life and ministry. Was Mr. Wesley's rabid commitment to life in community preveniently shaped at her kitchen table? Was his understanding of social holiness formed on her lap? Did these famous words of Mr. Wesley find their embryonic beginnings by John watching his mother?

> Directly opposite to this [the approach of the desert mystics] is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. "Holy solitaries" is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.[5]

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[4] D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 145.

[5] John Wesley, *The Letters of John Wesley* (London, England: The Epworth Press, 1931), 321.

Also, Mr. Wesley's passionate commitment to the Holy Club at Oxford that pre-date his heart-warming encounter at Aldersgate, his Pentecostal experience at Fetter Lane, and his encounter with "vulgar" field preaching at Bristol, all speak to an already forming commitment to living in loving, learning and leading teams. These many prevenient grace experiences shaped the young Mr. Wesley, that in later years became the formative elements of not only the disciple-making strategy of the early Methodist movement but its leadership development strategy.

Research has shown that most awakenings have lasted for a few days, weeks, or months. The Methodist awakening maintained its generativity for decades; some would argue more than a century. The. Wesleyan way of leadership deployment was vital to their "long obedience in the same direction." There is "gold" yet to be mined in the story of the early Methodist movement as it relates to generative team building.

Formation in Epworth

Samuel and Susanna Wesley reared their nineteen children (ten died in infancy) in a remote rural parsonage at Epworth, where Samuel was the pastor. He was a brilliant man with a scholarly bent who wrote on theology and published poetry, and no doubt helped shape the faith and character of his children. However, the influence of their mother Susanna most profoundly shaped the faith and practice of her famous sons, John and Charles, and thus the early Methodist movement. Susanna was rigorous and disciplined in her training of the boys and girls in the Wesley home, but it may have been John and Charles simply observing their mother in ministry that most influenced them. As the old saying goes, "Faith is more caught than taught."

For example, in 1711-12, while Samuel Wesley was away leaving the Epworth parish in the hands of an "inept curate," Susanna began inviting neighbors to attend a Sunday evening prayer gathering in the kitchen of the Epworth parsonage. However, the English Act of Toleration strictly forbade worship services to be held in homes, and Samuel sent a "cease and desist" letter to Susanna. In her letter back to him, Susanna wrote these strong words to Samuel:

> If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve the assembly…Send me your positive command, in such full and expressed terms as to absolve me from our guilt and punishment for neglecting the opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great an awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.[6]

It was this kind of dogged determination to provide spiritual sustenance to hungry souls regardless of status or stature that John and Charles observed in their mother and that no doubt informed their rugged commitment to help people grow in Christ. But, it was also a kind of "do whatever it takes" strategy that Susanna also cultivated in her two sons that they would emulate decades later in their ministry.

A Team at Oxford

From 1720 to 1727, John Wesley was a student at the prestigious Christ Church at Oxford. Upon receiving his baccalaureate degree in 1724, he began formal training for ordination in the Church of England. In a dual track of academic and ecclesiastical processes, John began his preparation for being a parish minister. In 1725, he began to read the works of Pietists like Thomas a Kempis and Jeremy Taylor. The Spirit

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[6] Richard P, Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013), 31-32.

quickened in John, and holiness of heart and life became the chief pursuit of the young Mr. Wesley.

Upon receiving his Master of Arts in early 1727, John accepted an invitation to serve with his father in Epworth. Charles was still studying at Christ Church and wrote to his brother John that the influence of deism and the irreligion at Oxford was taking a toll on his soul. John, having been stirred to a life of holiness earlier through his reading, encouraged his brother to do the same.

In May 1729, Charles began meeting weekly with two or three other students and encouraged John to join them. Heitzenrater writes, "John's diary reveals no regular meetings among the friends during his ten-week stay at Oxford during the summer of 1729, but the seeds of an organizational pattern began to germinate during this period."[7] Meeting together for "study, prayer and religious conversation" along with attending "the sacrament regularly" and keeping "track of their lives by daily notations in a dairy" were the seedbeds for the Methodist strategy of teams that watch over one another in love in the decades to come. The community dynamic of the Methodist revival found its roots in Oxford.

Organizing the Revival

Following his ministry debacle as a missionary in Georgia (1735-1737), his heartwarming experience at Aldersgate (May 24, 1738), his Pentecostal encounter at Fedder Lane (December 31, 1738-January 1, 1739), his observation of field preaching by George Whitefield in Bristol (April 1, 1739) and his first experience of field preaching in

[7] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 43.

Bristol (April 2, 1739), providentially the stage for the Wesleyan revival had been set. Ordinary Englanders responded to his message of salvation through faith and growth in grace. Many, particularly among the poor who had previously not been reached by the Church of England, desired to walk with God through the ministry of the Methodists.

A kind of "practical divinity" stirred in the heart and mind of the "vile" field preacher. One wonders if John's experience of spiritual incubators living in a Christian community with his brother John at Oxford converged with the ministerial innovations he observed with his mother at Epworth's kitchen in this early season of the revival. The results were environments and relationships that fostered spiritual growth for the interested and awakened British people. United Societies, class meetings, and bands were imaginatively established as "spaces" for people to take their "next step" in grace. Seekers found help and could experience God's prevenient grace in the United Societies. Those who were quickened by the Spirit and ready to experience justifying grace found a people, place, and process for conversion in the class meetings. Those who were ready to grow in Christlikeness and holiness could experience God's ongoing sanctifying grace in the bands. Dr. Steve Harper wrote of these "spaces" for experiencing God's waves of grace, "For each wave of grace, there was a corresponding formative element to connect people to that grace...this conscious alignment is one of Wesley's finest legacies to the Christian tradition."[8] This, indeed was one of John Wesley's genius.

It is well documented that John Wesley had what one might call an "on again-off again" relationship with George Whitefield, his mentor in the efficacy of field preaching. They regularly sparred with one another about theology and other matters of ministry.

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[8] Steve Harper, *The Way to Heaven.* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 54.

Nevertheless, George Whitfield also famously wrote of John Wesley's strategy for disciple-making, "My Brother Wesley acted wisely, the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand."[9] By "joined in class," Whitefield meant the "system of interlocking groups" that Wesley and the early Methodists established to help new converts of his preaching to grow to their next step in grace.[10] Adam Clark, an early historian of Methodism, confirmed Whitefield's assessment when he reported, "It was by this means—the formation of small groups—that we have been enabled to establish permanent and holy churches over the world. Mr. Wesley saw the necessity of this from the beginning. Mr. Whitefield, when he separated from Mr. Wesley, did not follow it."[11]

Mr. Wesley saw the essential element of community in the making of more and maturing disciples of Jesus on the journey of holiness. He and the entire Methodist movement were, in the title of a history on American Methodism, "organizing to beat the devil."[12] This impulse to make disciples in community would be replicated in the making of devoted leaders to join Mr. Wesley in managing the Methodist revival as it spread across Great Britain.

Managing the Movement

[9] George Whitefield, qtd. In Kenneth J. Collins, *John Wesley: A Theological Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 123.

[10] Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 83.

[11] Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 30.

[12] Charles W. Ferguson, *Organizing to Beat the Devil: Methodism and the Making of America* (Doubleday Press: New York, NY, 1971).

The revival in Bristol sparked a movement. Heitzenrater writes, "In his *Journal*, Wesley records the attendance at his field preaching during the first month in the Bristol area as totaling 47,500 and averaging about 3000 per occasion (by his estimation)."[13] However, he also noted about the ministry in these early days, "Contrary to some impressions, most of the occasions when persons 'received' remission of sins or were 'comforted' were those small meetings, not the large open-air preaching services."[14] As societies emerged or developed in London and Oxford, a serendipitous gathering occurred on November 12, 1739, just seven months after Wesley began his field preaching in Bristol. Heitzenrater reports

> … a 'connection' pattern of organization begins to appear in Wesley's activities, starting with a chance (or providential) meeting of three Johns - Wesley, John Gambold, and John Robson, all part of Oxford Methodism. They agreed to gather yearly at London on the eve of Ascension Day (usually in April or May). In addition, as many as possible, were also to meet quarterly there on the second Tuesday in July, October, and January. In the meantime, they would circulate monthly account of what each was doing in his own particular station.[15]

Though Wesley's strategy for managing the leadership necessary to lead the exploding revival was fluid (meaning he made changes regularly), he wanted to create systems that assured that Societies and their leaders were staying faithful to the mission. This gathering of movement leaders in 1739 became the precursor for a "conference" system where Mr. Wesley would examine and train preachers and regularly check on the condition of the Societies. Walk alongside supervision and mutual accountability was necessary for the vitality of the movement as it grew. Mr. Wesley knew that just as disciples were grown in community, so were leaders.

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[13] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 110.
[14] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 111.

[15] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 119-120.

By the 1749 Conference of the Methodist preachers in London, the primary issue was the unity of Societies spread throughout England. In his typical adaptive fashion, John Wesley suggested that London society be "the mother church" of the movement. In a spirit of mutual accountability, lists of members were collected every Easter, "usually noting four categories: awakened, seeker, justified, and sanctified…"[16] This was the level of accountability the early Methodist leaders established and expected of their leaders. As the movement grew, Mr. Wesley saw his role as the connector between the Societies. Heitzenrater writes, "John Wesley himself was becoming a link between these various societies…"[17] As the movement grew, Conference became the place and space for what could be called "quality control" as it relates to setting aside new preachers, examination of existing preachers, establishing doctrinal standards and the practices of Methodists, preaching topics, ministry to the poor, printing criteria and more.

Select Societies

A lesser-known group in early Methodism was a group of men and women hand-selected by John Wesley. known as the "select society." This group existed to serve as models of Christian perfection and as a training environment on both the doctrines and methods of the growing Methodist movement. Henderson writes of the select societies, "The select society was an elite corps of those enthusiasts who had worked their way up through the ranks of class meeting, society, and band and we're considered by both their

[16] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 194.

[17] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 154.

peers and the leaders to be the standard bearers of the movement."[18] However, unlike the scouting program of our day, there were no "badges" for being in the select society. Instead, it was simply an intentional gathering of women and men who embodied the best of the Methodist movement and desired to continue to grow in grace.

In *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists,* Wesley describes the Select Society this way:

> I saw it might be useful to give some advice as to those who continued in the light of God's covenant, which the rest of their brethren did not want, and probably could not receive. So I desire a small number of such as appeared to be in the state, to spend an hour with me every Monday morning. My design was, not only to direct them how to press after perfection; to exercise their every grace, and improve every talent they had received; and to incite them to love one another more, and to watch more carefully over each other; but also to have a select company, to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions, without reserve; and whom I could propose to all their brethren in as a pattern of love, of holiness, and of good works. [19]

These leaders had been invited to live in rich and deep formational community with one another. The aims were personal holiness of heart and life, growing in ministerial capacity, and living in a gracious yet accountable community.

However, it is also important to note that this became a place for Mr. Wesley to "unbosom" himself. This word, not used in the 21st century, means "to disclose or reveal." It is fascinating that Mr. Wesley was self-aware enough to create a people and place for himself to live in grace and truth with fellow believers. Henderson reports, "Wesley encouraged a freewheeling and open discussion, especially on matters significant to the direction and policies of Methodism. He welcomed criticism of the

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[18] Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 121.
[19] Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 122.

system and of his own place in it."[20] Wesley understood the wisdom of a "do as I do" kind of spirituality. He "ate what he cooked."

The Leaders in the Early Methodist Movement

Despite John Wesley's tight grip on the leadership of the Methodist movement, one might describe the leadership strategy in the early Methodist revival as shared leadership. A diverse group of women and men from all social strata and religious pedigrees managed the exploding movement. Lovett Weems captures it well when he writes:

> From the beginning of the Wesleyan movement, many people functioned as leaders. People from different social locations helped lead this passionate movement of God. There was no one route to leadership in the Wesleyan ranks. Leadership came from the Church of England priests and also from a stonemason, a printer and publisher, a baker, a cobbler and a schoolmaster. Leaders were male and female, ordained and lay, of noble birth and modest origin, black and white.[21]

The ranks of a diverse pool of women and men were discovered, developed, and deployed from within the burgeoning Societies throughout England.

The Rev. John Telford (1851-1936) compiled seven volumes about the lives and ministries of several pioneer Methodist ministers in a series called *Wesley's Veterans.* Each volume is filled with the personal memoirs of these front-line workers. In the preface to the first volume, Telford writes:

> Wesley could never have fulfilled his mission without the band of preachers whom providence provided for him against his will. He soon found that the Spirit of God which had strangely warmed his own heart and touched his own lips had bestowed the same grace on these homely men of the people. They became his best friends and his noblest colleagues.[22]

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[20] Henderson, *John Wesley's Class Meeting: A Model for Making Disciples*, 123.
[21] Lovett Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989), 3.

[22] John Telford, Editor, *Wesley's Veteran's* (Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishers, 1976), 5-6.

Ironically, the picture on the front cover of the first volume (Figure 1) is a drawing of a man with his head turned downward, sitting atop an equally worn-out horse, trudging along, no doubt headed off to the next Methodist preaching station. It once again unintentionally affirms a false understanding of Wesley and the early Methodists as heroic solo leaders. This is in keeping with the vast number of statues of Wesley as well as others like Francis Asbury atop horses traveling along some lonesome British or American trail. Yet, paradoxically, these seven volumes give details about the team that Mr. Wesley deployed to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.

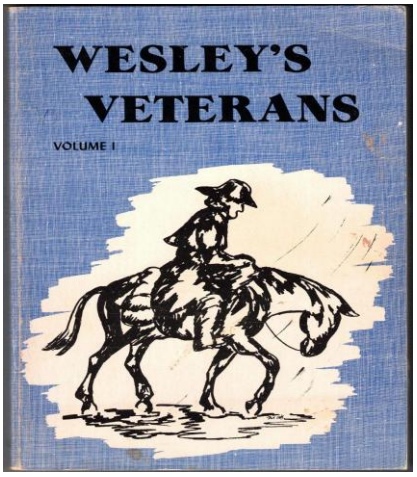

Figure 3. Cover of Wesley's Veterans

Dr. Kevin Watson has given contemporary followers of Jesus in the Wesleyan stream of Christianity a great gift by summarizing the Wesleyan Standard sermons on his blog (www.kevinwatsom.com). His background comments on the 33rd sermon, "A Caution Against Bigotry" are captivating. The message is based on the biblical text Mk 9:38-39 (CEB): John said to Jesus, "Teacher, we saw someone throwing demons out in your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us." Jesus replied,

"Don't stop him. No one who does powerful acts in my name can quickly turn around and curse me." Dr. Watson comments this way on this sermon:

> This sermon is written in the context of Wesley's leadership of Methodism as a renewal movement within the Church of England and the tensions that were often just below the surface between his ordination as a priest in the Church of England and his leadership of Methodism. Wesley's use of lay preachers, in particular, was controversial and is an important part of the background of this sermon…[23]

As committed as John Wesley was to the Church of England and all things Anglican because of the sovereign movement of God through the people called Methodists, he refused to diminish it by sequestering the work of ministry to the ordained alone. This robust lay preacher strategy made and kept the fires of the Methodist revival stoked. This sermon defends his strategy to train and deploy lay preachers regardless of ecclesiastical pushback.

Watson also points out that Wesley's argument for using lay preachers was the undeniable fruitfulness in the ministry of lay preachers. He comments, "…the sermon should be read in part as an appeal for not interfering with lay preachers whose ministry bears fruit [they are "casting out devils"] by leaders within the Church of England. The sermon has a variety of intriguing applications in the contemporary context."[24] Watson discerns that the "key quote" in this sermon is:

> 'But what is a sufficient, reasonable proof that a man does (in the sense above) cast out devils?' The answer is easy. Is there full proof, first, that a person before us was a gross, open sinner? Secondly, that he is not so now; that he has broke off his sins, and lives a Christian life? And thirdly, that his change was wrought by his hearing this man preach? If these three points be plain and undeniable, then you have sufficient, reasonable proof, such as you cannot resist without willful

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[23] Kevin Watson. *John Wesley's Sermon "A Caution Against Bigotry: A Brief Summary."* www.kevinwatson.com. April 13, 2021. https://kevinmwatson.com/2021/04/13/john-wesleys-sermon-a-caution-against-bigotry-a-brief-summary/.

[24] Watson. *John Wesley's Sermon "A Caution Against Bigotry: A Brief Summary."*

sin, that this man casts out devils. [III.3][25]

To quote a much-used southernism, “The proof is in the pudding.” The irrefutable personal life transformation and abundant ministry wrought by lay preachers was Mr. Wesley’s defense.

An incident in 1741, just three years after Wesley’s heartwarming Aldersgate experience, with the Assistant at the Society in London captures Wesley’s change of heart regarding lay preachers. Thomas Maxfield was a gifted young leader whom Wesley left in charge of the Society. The young, inexperienced leader took it upon himself to gather the entire Society and preach. This was beyond the scope of Maxfield’s responsibility and authority. Wesley quickly returned and scolded the young leader. Susanna, John’s mother, challenged him on his actions. Thomas Coke and Henry Moore record the incident like this:

> His mother then lived in his house, adjoining the Foundery. When he arrived, she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. 'Thomas Maxfield,' said he abruptly, 'has turned Preacher, I find.' She looked attentively at him and replied, 'John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of readily favouring anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' He did so. His prejudice bowed before the force of truth: and he could only say, 'It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth good.[26]

Upon carefully examining the preaching ministry of Maxfield, Wesley could not help but to see that God indeed had given the young leader gifts and graces for the preaching ministry. This was a defining moment for Mr. Wesley.

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[25] Watson. *John Wesley’s Sermon “A Caution Against Bigotry: A Brief Summary.”*

[26] Adrian Burdon. *Authority and Order: John Wesley and his Preachers*. Routledge. https://doi-org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.4324/9781315261959. 22.

An interesting fact about the tension Wesley navigated between his allegiance to Church of England and leading the Methodist movement was his insistence that lay preachers not administer the sacraments. Nevertheless, Wesley to the end of his life considered himself "a Church of England man." Rev. Adrian Burton writes of Wesley's insistence:

> John Wesley realised that the single-most important factor in preventing, or promoting, the movement of Methodists away from the Church of England, concerned the question of sacramental ministry. Some of his people, feeling the Anglican clergy to be unworthy, wanted to receive Holy Communion from the hands of the Methodist Preachers. The issue became of increased importance in those places where the parish clergy refused to allow the Methodists admission to the sacrament. Wesley, however, for most of his life, believed that the authorisation of his Preachers to administer the sacraments would lead to the separation of the Methodists from the Church of England. This was a step that he was not willing to countenance.[27]

Managing this tension was never easy for Wesley. However, he modeled the principle taught by contemporary megachurch pastor Andy Stanley, who writes, "In leadership, there are always problems to be solved and tensions to be managed."[28] This was Wesley's challenge until the end of his life in managing the tension between his commitment to Church of England with her polity and his adaptive leadership style of the swelling Methodist revival.

Exactly how Wesley discovered, developed, and deployed lay preachers is fuzzy at best. Leaders within the Methodist disciple-making systems of societies, classes, and bands seemed to emerge organically. It did not appear to have a defined leadership

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[27] Burdon, *Authority and Order: John Wesley and his Preachers*, 5.

[28] Andy Stanley. *Managing Tensions*. www.andystanley.com. March 10, 2015. https://andystanley.com/podcast/managing-tension/

training "track." Some were interviewed. Others were enlisted and assigned by Wesley. Burton writes:

> The pattern, which can be seen, was that the people would become aware of a sense of call, but often received it with reluctance or resistance. This sense of call would grow in strength until those who felt it realised that they must do something about it. Often their first act would be to consult with fellow members of the Society. John Wesley was willing to help those who felt a call to preach to work through the process of discovering whether that call was fitting.[29]

The pattern of a woman or man sensing a call (discover) and then Wesley and others helping confirm that call (develop) and finally commissioning them for Methodist ministry (deploy) seems to be present in the narratives.

Through autobiographies of some of his "sons of the Gospel," we know that he carefully interviewed and then deployed some for Methodist ministry. Burton gives this example:

> One of the clearest accounts of being interviewed and appointed is given by Joseph Cownley who, in 1746, met with John Wesley at Bristol. At the climax of that interview Cownley knelt down, and Wesley, putting the New Testament into his hand, said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.' Wesley then gave Cownley his benediction. Thus authorised, Cownley went on his way.[30]

This was one of the patterns for deploying lay preachers in the early Methodism. Others did not follow this specific leadership development pattern.

The New Room in Bristol (www.newroombristol.org.uk), is considered by many to be "the cradle of Methodism."[31] The curators of the museum have consistently told guests that one of the functions of the New Room was to examine lay preachers by Mr. Wesley. There was and still is a large parapet in the roof of the main room with windows

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[29] Burdon, *Authority and Order: John Wesley and his Preachers*, 25.
[30] Burdon, *Authority and Order: John Wesley and his Preachers*, 24.

[31] I have traveled to the New Room in 1995, 2005, 2013, 2014, 2018, 2019 with groups of United Methodist Pastors as well as with my wife on Sabbatical.

all around it. Mr. Wesley was known to look down from the perch, examining both the preaching of the preachers-in-training and the congregation's response. This is but one example of an early Methodist leadership development strategy.

The Conferencing strategy of the early Methodist movement was in significant part designed for the examination of preachers. In 1774, as Wesley began to have serious health problems and with concerns about the future leader(s) of the Methodist movement heightened, Joseph Benson brought a proposal to Wesley. Heitzenrater writes of the motivation for Benson's proposal:

> … Joseph Benson, sensitive to Wesley's condition as well as his outlook on separation from the church but worried about the insufficiency of many of the preachers and concern for the future of the connection, proposed the scheme for the regularization of Methodism along ecclesiastical lines. Benton's plan, developed in the summer of 1775, was to examine all the preachers, then set apart those who are qualified for the work of ministry and set aside those who are deficient in gifts and grace. The borderline cases with potential could be sent to Kingswood school for further training.[32]

Benson's impulse to "set apart" and "set aside" preachers was in keeping with Wesley's deep desire for faithful and fruitful Methodist leaders.

Wesley and the early Methodists were committed to the "setting apart" of new lay preachers. However, they were equally committed to the "setting aside" of lay preachers who were not meeting the standards and expectations. Heitzenrater writes about the 1776 Conference:

> … the examination of the preachers became more pointed because of the acknowledge objection "that some are utterly on qualified for the work, and that others do it negligently, as if they imagined they had nothing to do but preach once or twice a day." To meet this complaint, Wesley examined with special care those about whom there was some doubt.[33]

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[32] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 286.

[33] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 296.

At this Conference, three lay preachers were set aside. But, repeatedly and courageously, Wesley and the leaders of the movement kept the mission of the movement primary and resisted credentialing without ongoing accountability to faithfulness to God and fruitfulness for God.

The story of John Wesley's relationship with John Trembeth, a gifted Methodist leader, is recounted in the book, *Vital: Churches Changing Communities and the World,*.[34] Despite, his giftedness, in letters written to Trembeth, Wesley chided the Methodist preacher for his lack of reading and his un-sustained personal devotional life in prayer and meditation. Wesley famously wrote these words of correcting encouragement:

> Oh begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way: else you will be a trifler all your days…Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross, and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you.[35]

This supervisory letter from Wesley captures the heart of oversight that the early Methodists both endured and enjoyed. Thus, another unique dimension to the leadership strategy of lay preachers is that once discovered, developed, and deployed, the ongoing sanctifying work of the preacher continued for lay preachers.

The Struggle with Succession

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[34] Jorge Acevedo, *Vital: Churches Changing Communities and the World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 2012) 28.

[35] John Wesley. *The Letters of John Wesley*. Edited by John Telford. London, England: The Epworth Press, 1931. 4:102.

By August 1769, John Wesley was sixty-six years old. With his increasing age and bouts of illness, a conversation about what would happen to Methodism after his death became an issue. At the Conference in Leeds in 1769, Wesley "…recognized that he was presently the 'center of the union to all our traveling as well as local preachers,' but looked toward the situation after his death."[36] He suggested that a committee of three, five or seven with rotating moderators would lead and guide the connection. It seems Mr. Wesley was struggling with how to guarantee that the movement would not drift in its core convictions following his death. Unfortunately, this recommendation did not happen.

By 1772, at the age of 69, following an accident while riding his horse the previous year, the issue of succession arose again for the Methodist movement. However, once again, nothing of substance was adopted. By 1784, Mr. Wesley was 81. Thomas Coke assisted Wesley in preparing a Deed of Declaration that listed "the Legal Hundred." These 100 and their successors would legally be forever more the Conference of the People called Methodists. Ownership of the movement would be transferred upon the death of both John and Charles Wesley to the Conference. "With this Deed, Wesley had taken a major step to help settle the future of the Methodist movement in Britain…"[37] Historians disagree as to the wisdom and fruitfulness of Wesley's succession plan.

Conclusion

[36] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 266.
[37] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, 317.

The wisdom of discovering, developing, and deploying a diverse group of women and men to be "lay preachers" was indeed strategic and fruitful for Wesley, and the people called Methodists. Weems writes, "Methodism could not have grown in numbers and expanded geographically apart from lay preachers."[38] It is not a stretch to deduce that this diverse leadership pool resulted from the dogged commitment of the early Methodist movement to entire sanctification. The "bullseye" of the Methodist movement was not "justification by faith" but "sanctification." He focused on not just "more" followers of Jesus (salvation/evangelism) but "maturing" followers of Jesus (sanctification/discipleship). What he aimed at mattered, and Wesley aimed at leading a movement of people, regardless of gender, religious pedigree, socioeconomics, or ethnicity, who grew in holiness of heart and life.

Mr. Wesley believed that every follower of Jesus had a capacity and contribution to bring to the Kingdom of God that was coming "on earth as it is in heaven." He held to a theology and practice of what could be called "the priesthood of believers on steroids." Weems is correct when he writes, "All of us are leaders. All of us are ministers. All have a ministry. Ministry belongs to the whole people of God."[39]

Mr. Wesley believed that there was Kingdom potential and possibility in every follower of Jesus. The movement he led sought to release that in every follower of Jesus in the Methodist system, whether the person was a chambermaid or a member of Parliament. In *The Character of a Methodist*, Wesley describes this:

> Lastly. As he has time, he "does good unto all men;" unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or

[38] Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 40.
[39] Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 40.

> in prison;" but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth; to awaken those that sleep in death; to bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, "being justified by faith, they may have peace with God;" and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to "spend and be spent herein," even "to be offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith," so they may "all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."[40]

This work of awakening souls to God was the common work of all of God's people, not just credentialed work of some of God's people. Everybody in early Methodism was expected to engage in all the work of Kingdom expansion. This subtle yet powerful shift in focus may be the genius of the movement.

Through the lens of ministry within the eighty-seven years of his life, it could be argued that no single leader's ministry since the apostles has been as fruitful and far-reaching as John Wesley's. Dr. Winfield Bevins beautifully summarizes the fantastic life of John Wesley:

> By the time of John Wesley's death in 1791, Methodism had become a global church movement with more than 70,000 members in England and more than 40,000 in the newly-founded United States and other mission stations around the world. Due to its strong foundation, the growth of Methodism continued well beyond the life of Wesley.[41]

Bevins continues to describe the impact of Mr. Wesley's life and ministry in America:

> Under the leadership of Francis Asbury, Methodism in North America grew from 1,200 to 200,000 strong, with over 4,000 preachers. By 1830, official membership was almost 250,000, and the number of actual attenders was six million. Then, in the half century from 1850 to 1905, American Methodism averaged planting over 700 churches per year.

Finally, he concludes these well-earned kudos with this contemporary benchmark:

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[40] John Wesley, *The Character of a Methodist* (London, England: Methodist Conference Office, 1814) 11.

[41] Winfield Bevins, *Word and Table: Recovering the Evangelical and Sacramental Legacy of John Wesley.* www.firebrandmag.com. October 12, 2020. https://firebrandmag.com/articles/word-and-table-recovering-the-evangelical-and-sacramental-legacy-of-john-wesley

> Today, the World Methodist Council represents over 50 million adherents worldwide. While there are major differences, each can trace their roots back to John Wesley.

There is no arguing about his impact on the movement of Jesus.

One caution for those who swim in the Wesleyan stream is to memorialize the life, and ministry of Wesley and the people called Methodist and resist doing the hard work of replicating the spirit of the movement in our contemporary context with its challenges and opportunities. Weems prophetically writes,

> Our task is not to return to a time long gone. Rather we seek to learn from Wesleyan principles, practices, and passions. These come from the example of John Wesley and also from the Wesley movement itself…[42]

This is our charge to keep as those who stand in the Wesleyan stream!

[42] Weems, *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, 33-34.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Little is more captivating and breathtaking than the beauty, majesty, and mystery of the Incarnation. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us…" (Jn 1:14) stirs many theological questions. At the top of the list is how did God decide to give "…his only Son?" (Jn 3:16). A sanctified and generous imagination takes one to a celestial meeting room where the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit hold a strategic meeting to create a plan to redeem the whole of creation. "How can we fix our broken handiwork?" is the adaptive challenge.

After a high-trust, noisy meeting with Godself, God settles on sending the second Person of the Trinity to our sin-sick, war-torn, blood-stained, blue-green planet. He will be born of a virgin, named "Jesus," and live in utter obscurity in a nowhere village called Nazareth. At 30, the Rabbi will gather around him twelve "talmidim," the Hebrew word for "disciples" or "apprentices." For three years, these twelve will observe and learn the way of the Kingdom of God. In the spirit of "watch me then do," they will observe their Rabbi as he teaches, preaches, and heals. Jesus will ultimately be killed by a collusion of religion and government, falsely accused of blasphemy. The centers and leaders from Jerusalem and Rome will work in concert to crucify God in the flesh on a criminal's cross at a garbage heap outside of the City of David. Three days later, Jesus will rise from the

dead, defeating sin, hell, and death. Forty days later, he will ascend to the Father but not before charging his soon-to-be Spirit-empowered "talmidim" with extending the Good News of his resurrection to "…Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

God's celestial strategy for the redemption of all of creation was two-fold. It was first to send the Son to die for the sins of the creation but also to enlist a diverse team to carry the message to the world after the Son returned to the Father. Part two of the redemptive plan of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was to establish a generative team charged with extending the movement established by Jesus that continues to this day. Redemption for the creation is grounded in the death, burial, and resurrection of the God-man, Jesus, and the establishment of generative, disciple-making teams we call "the Church" to carry on the work of Jesus in the earth. Jesus said to this missional people: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you." (Jn 14:26) Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent by the Father, in the name of the Son, Jesus to the people of God. The mysterious Triune God cooperates so that God's missionary people might declare and demonstrate God's love for a broken world as they abide in God.

Perichoresis Defined

The perichoretic relationship of the Trinity is the focus of this chapter. "Trinity as Team," living in the unity and diversity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, foreshadows and captures the unity and diversity of healthy and holy generative teams doing Kingdom work on behalf of the triune God as they live in God.

The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity defines perichoresis this way. "The term perichoresis indicates the mode of existence of the persons of the Holy Trinity characterized by interpenetration, co-inhabitation, mutual fellowship, surrounding, or indwelling. In Greek, "perichoreo" means to "make room," to "go or revolve around."[1] Dr. Steve Seamands offers, "Perichoresis conveys a number of ideas: reciprocity, interchange, giving to and receiving from one another, being drawn to one another and contained in the other, interpenetrating one another by drawing life from and pouring life into one another as a fellowship of love."[2] Dr. Seamands describes this perichoretic relationship of the Trinity as "mutual indwelling and interpenetration. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, by virtue of their eternal love, live in, dwell in each other to such an extent that they are one." [3] Theologians often described perichoresis as the "circle dance" of the Trinity as they explain the mysterious "choreography" between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Perichoresis and Church History

Perichoresis was promoted and popularized in the eighth century by the Eastern theologian John of Damascus. He wrote of the Trinity:

> They are inseparable and cannot part from one another, but keep to their separate courses within one another, without coalescing or mingling, but cleaving to each other. For the Son is in the Father and the Spirit; and the Spirit is in the Father and the Son; and the Father in the Son and the Spirit but there is no coalescence or commingling or confusion. And there is one in the same motion: for there is one

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[1] Theodor Damien, "Perichoresis." In *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, edited by John Anthony McGuckin (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 444.

[2] Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005) 141.

[3] Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God,* 141.

> impulse and one motion of the three subsistences, which is not to be observed in any created nature.[4]

Navigating carefully between oneness and three-ness, unity and diversity, John of Damascus stirred the theological imagination of the Church. It should be noted that some have argued that the Church in the East has leaned into the three-ness of the Trinity while the Western Church has leaned into the oneness. This has been the holy tension to manage when speaking, writing, and thinking of the mysterious triune God.

Further grounding perichoresis in Church History, the 1442 Council of Florence acknowledged this doctrine. "In affirming the mutual indwelling and interpenetration of the triune persons, the Council made explicit what is only implicit in Scripture. Jesus alludes to it when he says, 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me' (John 14:11; cf. 10:38). He is speaking of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the incarnate Son, but his declaration also points to the mutual indwelling of the Father and the *pre*incarnate Son from all eternity."[5] Jurgen Moltmann adds to the conversation a brilliant tension that perichoresis manages when he writes, "The idea of mutual indwelling, perichoresis, goes back to the theology of the Greek Fathers, and makes it possible to conceive of a community without uniformity and a personhood without individualism."[6] Community and uniformity, personhood and individualism are tensions when considering the Trinity.

For 2000 years, theologians have wrestled and even argued with navigating the Trinity's oneness and three-ness. From the very beginning, we must acknowledge that the unity and the diversity of the Godhead is, as Moltmann describes, a tension between

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[4] John of Damascus quoted in Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God,* 143.

[5] Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God,* 141.

[6] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000) 316.

uniformity and individualism. God in three Persons commingles without coalescing. Moltmann argues that perichoresis keeps us from either modalism or tritheism:

> This perichoretic form of unity is the only conceivable trinitarian concept of unity of the triune God, because it combines threeness and oneness in such a way that cannot be reduced to each other, so that both the danger of modalism and the danger of 'tritheism' are excluded. If we understand the divine life perichoretically, it cannot be realized by a single subject alone, and cannot be thought without the three divine Persons. Their shared nature, their shared consciousness and their shared will is formed intersubjectively through their specific personhood in each case, by their specific consciousness in each case, and by their own will in each case. The Father becomes conscious of himself by being conscious of the Son and so forth.[7]

Coloring within these lines requires profoundly careful theological work. Perichoresis can, by its nature, lean into the three-ness of God or modalism.[8] Again, there is a mystery to any theological discussion about the Trinity.

Perichoresis and the Church

More recent theological thinkers have used perichoretic relationship of the Trinity as a metaphor for the relational and social dynamics within the Godhead and even the Body of Christ. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology* expands perichoresis' application to theology this way: "Recent Trinitarian thinkers, especially those drawn towards social analogies to the Trinity, have laid considerable emphasis on the concept of perichoresis. In many cases there is a tendency for the underlying metaphors to shift from the spatial to the psychological and emotional, so that perichoresis is imagined as a

[7] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 322.

[8] For a satire on modalism, see "St. Patrick's Bad Analogies"; https://youtu.be/KQLfgaUoQCw.

peculiarly intense love, empathy, or interpersonal closeness."[9] This "social" analogy captures divine community at its best or "the Trinity as Team." This unique relationship of the Trinity within Godself is a powerful metaphor for the perichoretic relationship of a healthy generative team with a shared common mission.

This unique Christian understanding of the Trinity seems lost in much of our contemporary leadership practice. Followers of Jesus believe that the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, lives in mysterious community with Godself. Fredrick Dale Bruner uses the word "shy" to describe the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person in the Godhead has an "almost total preoccupation" with the other two persons. The Father defers to the Son and the Spirit. The Son defers to Father and Spirit. The Spirit defers to the Father and the Son. "The whole blessed Trinity is shy. Each member of the Trinity points faithfully and selflessly to the other in a gracious circle."[10] Or, as Moltmann wrote, "…the Trinity is a non-hierarchical community."[11]

According to the biblical witness, our triune God made humans in God's image (Gn 1:27). Stamped into humanity no matter how tarnished by sin is the "imago Dei." God exists in community with Godself; thus, it seems that we who are made in God's image function best when we live and lead in a community that practices holy and healthy deference to one another. Church leadership that does not reflect this theological reality in practical ministry is muted and dwarfed at best.

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[9] Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis." In *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilby, and et. al.. (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 383. 9

[10] Fredrick Dale Brunner and William Hordern, *The Holy Spirit: Shy Member of the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers,1984), 19.

[11] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 317.

Moltmann brilliantly reminds us, "It is important to stress that the unity of the church corresponds to the perichoretic unity of the three divine Persons, not to a single person in the Trinity."[12] He traced Christian history through ecclesiastical movements and epochs when the hierarchy and theologians of the church emphasized one of the Persons of the Trinity. There have been seasons in church history when the emphasis was on the kingship of God the Father. During the Reformation, Christ the Son of God was at the center of the church's thought. Throughout Pentecostal movements, the power and presence of the Holy Spirit was primary to the church's identity. "The church is meant to correspond neither to the Father nor to the Son nor to the Spirit, each for itself, but to their *eternal perichoresis*."[13] The church is more God-like when it reflects the Triune nature of God.

Bishop Timothy Whitaker was the Bishop of the Florida Area of the United Methodist Church from 2001-2012.[14] Bishop Whitaker sought to faithfully embody the role of Bishop as a theologian during his ministry in Florida. Our local church had developed a "Playbook" to describe our contextually unique vision, values, strategy, structure, and theology. The "Playbook" was going to be used to establish the non-negotiables of our multi-site ministry, so it was sent to Bishop Whitaker for his evaluation, suggestions, and ultimate approval. Ironically, he did not question or comment on any of the "Playbook" except on one of our core values. The core value was the first of three: "We are unashamedly Christ-centered." Bishop Whitaker challenged

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[12] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 328.

[13] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 329.

[14] "Bishop Timothy Whitaker," www.umc.org. https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/person-detail/2464107.

our team to consider being trinitarian. Our team knew he was correct, after which we changed this core value to: "We are unashamedly God-centered. The triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is the One we worship and serve to His glory." Bishop Whitaker echoed Jurgen Moltmann's caution for the church to correspond to the Trinity's "eternal perichoresis" and not simply to the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit.

Nigerian theologian Merci Amba Oduyoye links the harmony between the persons of the Trinity "as the original image of a successful community." [15]

> The Christian proclamation that God is not a nomad but rather a center of relations in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act and interact without subsuming or subordinating any of the Persons and yet act as One toward the world—may provide us with a model of the integrity of persons within community and their interrelatedness…The doctrine of the Trinity may yield models for building the human community—not on a hierarchy of beings but on the diversity of gifts that operate in an integrative manner.

From her beautiful and unique West African context, Oduyoye points to the nomadic herders of western Africa as antithetical to the nature of the Trinity. God is not a wandering, itinerant, distant God but is close and intimate with Godself and humanity. The Trinity becomes a model "for building human community" not based on a pecking order or chain of command but rather a web of diverse women and men cooperating for a unified purpose.

Trinity, Perichoresis, and Scripture

The word "Trinity" is not found in the pages of sacred Scripture, however, "The doctrine of the Trinity, which affirms that God is three Persons (traditionally designated, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in one substance, has been a touchstone of

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[15] Merci Amba Oduyoye quoted in Henning Wrogemann. *Intercultural Theology: Intercultural Hermeneutics* (Missiological Engagements)." Apple Books.

Christian orthodoxy since the late fourth century."[16] The Church struggled for centuries with language to fully describe the mystery of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, the Council of Nicaea, and many more thinkers and Councils all shaped and refined our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity that continues today.[17] However, there appears in the New Testament "traces" of the Trinity as the biblical writers comingled terms like "Father," "Son," "Holy Spirit," "Jesus," and "God" to describe God's activity in the world, the Church and Christians.[18]

In the Gospels

A few New Testament texts are significantly more explicit in using the trinitarian formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, affirming both the perichoretic tension of unity and diversity, uniformity, and individualism. Take, for example, Mt 3:13-17:

> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus, the Son is baptized as "the Spirit of God descended like a dove," and a voice from heaven declared, "This is my Son…" The word

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[16] Karen Kilby, "Trinity." In *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Ian A. McFarland, David A. S. Fergusson, Karen Kilby, and et. al.. (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 518. https://dtl.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/cupdct/perichoresis/0?institutionId=8909

[17] Karen Kilby, "Trinity," 518.

[18] For example, 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; Galatians 3:11–14; Hebrews 10:29; 1 Peter 1:21.

"Son" acknowledges that the voice is from the Father. The belovedness of the Son resoundingly declared by the Father serves as a foreshadowing witness to the belovedness of those who follow Christ.

Matthew continues this baptismal trinitarian formula for God in his biography of Jesus at the end of his life. Matthew describes Jesus' post-resurrection charge to his disciples in what the Church has called "the Great Commission." In Mt 28:16-20, we read:

> Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Nowhere is the trinitarian formula as explicit as in this missional imperative to baptize new disciples "…in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." The making of disciples is intimately connected to the marking of a new identity for the apprentice, not simply in the name of Jesus but in the name of the trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This new trinitarian identity is central to a Christian's life and mission for God. Christ-followers connection with the Trinity gives them both "roots" or identity and "wings" or mission.

Jesus' teaching in Jn 15:1-11 using the metaphor of the vineyard to describe a living, dynamic, intimate, and growing relationship with God is very helpful in our discussion around perichoresis. Jesus teaches that the Father is the vinedresser and that he is the vine (15:1). His talmidim are the branches (15:5). The "you" in these verses is in the plural, indicating that Jesus was speaking to the collective disciples and not any single

disciple. Alternately, as some people say in the South, Jesus was addressing "yawl," not simply "you." This abiding work is community work for God and for God's people.

In verse 4, Jesus says, "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me" (Jn 15:4). The Greek word Jesus used for "abide" is *meno*. This word is found 102 times in the New Testament and eleven times in John 15:1-11 alone.[19] It means "to remain," "to sojourn," "to tarry," and "to not depart." Explicit in this teaching of Jesus are two Persons of the Trinity, the Father as the vinedresser and the Son as the branches. Implicit in this teaching is that the Holy Spirit is the "sap" that enlivens the branches. The connection between God and God's disciples is profoundly intimate and corporate. The mysterious "dance" between Godself and God's people is seldom more familiar than in these words of Jesus. However, it must be acknowledged that the union that followers of Jesus experience with the Trinity "…is only a dim reflection of the characteristic of trinitarian life…"[20]

A primary New Testament text that fostered the dialogue around perichoresis throughout history is a portion of Jesus' High Priestly prayer in Jn 17:21, "…that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Moltmann in commenting on Jesus' high priestly prayer in Jn 17:21writes, "The fellowship of the disciples with each other, for which Jesus prays, is intended to *correspond* to the reciprocal indwelling of the Father and the Son in the Spirit: or so we may be permitted to add. The trinitarian fellowship of

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[19] *Meno*, www.biblestudytools.com.

[20] Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God,* 141.

God is here the prototype, the church, the reflection."[21] Disciples baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19) are joining "the trinitarian fellowship of God."

In Paul's Writings

The Apostle Paul weaves together the persons of the Trinity and the experience of the Christ follower in Rom 8:12-17:

> So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Life in the Spirit not only empowers the believer's freedom over sin but also the existential affirmation of living as a child of God, so much so that the Christ follower cries out, "Abba! Father!" Abba is the intimate Hebrew word for "Daddy." It is not unusual to hear little children tenderly cry out to their fathers, "Abba" in Jewish contexts.

Another New Testament text that affirms the perichoretic nature of the Trinity is Paul's benediction 2 Cor 13:13 (NIV), "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Paul bestows upon the missionary outposts in Corinth the triune God's blessing of grace, love and fellowship. Moltmann describes the Christian's experience of the triune God based on this trinitarian structure. "In the co-workings of grace, love and fellowship the trinitarian experience of God is born. Christ accepts us in grace that has no preconditions, God the Father loves us with an unconditional love, the Spirit brings us into community with all

[21] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 328.

the living. The three Persons act in differentiated ways, but they all concur in a unified movement, which creates new and, in its newness, eternal life."[22] The Christian's experience of God's grace, love, and fellowship is grounded and rooted in the being of the Trinity.

In the Book of Acts

After describing the life and ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke, Luke turns to his second "Gospel," the Book of Acts, to describe part two of God's redemptive plan for the creation, the releasing of a God-intoxicated people to spread the Good News. Acts 2 describes the coming of the Holy Spirit in a new way. [23] The Spirit of God that previously was limited in his presence and power to certain people and circumstances is poured out on the diverse people of God. Acts 2:5 describes the multi-ethnic diversity of the women and men who encountered and were encountered by the Holy Spirit. "Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem." Later quoting the prophet Joel, Peter says, "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18). Here Peter centers the Holy Spirit's activity among a diversity of gender, age and economics.

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[22] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 326-327.

[23] CF. Acts 2:13 (NRSV) "But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." And Ephesians 5:18 (NRSV) "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit…"

The Father and the Son have sent the promised Spirit (Jn 15:26) on the people of God so they could be "powered up" for Kingdom work. Missio Dei (the mission of God) releases Missio ecclesia (the mission of the Church). The Sender God (Father), the Sent God (Son), and the Sending God (Holy Spirit) are empowering the people of God to be witnesses in "…Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Peter stands to preach. He describes how the prophesied, Spirit-enlivened people of God would be male and female, young and old, slave and free. There was ethnic, gender, age, and economic diversity in these first Spirit-empowered people. Decades later, Paul would affirmingly write of a unified but diverse missional people, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Jesus had earlier told the disciples in John 16:7, "But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you." What is better than one Jesus? How about a multi-ethnic group of 120 women and men, young and old, rich and poor, who are the beloved-of-the-Father, Jesus-following, and Advocate-filled to reach a diverse and broken world? The Missio ecclesia is made up of all types with a joint mission. This is God's new community in a desperately broken world.

Diversity is such a charged word. For some, it is a stomach-turning political term. It can mean "one of these and one of those" to a place of absurdity. "We need a blonde-haired, blue-eyed, straight, white male from…" Diversity in this way means everybody is represented to be fair. It leans into justice. This is not the diversity of Acts 2. The diversity of Acts 2 is missional. God in God's triune wisdom releases an ethnically-diverse, gender-diverse, age-diverse, and economically-diverse Spirit-filled people to

reach a diverse world. The sending of the Spirit to all people was not about "checking all the boxes" but about reaching a diverse planet made up of diverse people with the Good News. Sadly, many seem to want "everybody at the table" as an end. God's hope and vision are so much more robust and transformational.

The diverse community of new followers of Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit is described in radical terms, especially in these first chapters of Acts. Luke describes their life together in this way in Acts 2:43-47:

> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Despite their ethnic, gender, age, and economic diversity, they lived a common life of unity. The supernatural was normative, as was the practical sharing of possessions and goods, life in community, the partaking of meals, and worship, all leading to winsome and vibrant multiplication. Living a perichoretic life in God and with one another bore fruit that was both deep and wide.

When asking the question, "What does this community look like?" Moltmann points to Acts 4:32, 34a: "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common…There was not a needy person among them…" He writes:

> This so-called 'early Christian communism' was not a social programme. It was the expressior of the new trinitarian experience of community. People put their community above the individual in their private possessions. They no longer needed these possessions to give their lives security. In the spirit of the resurrection their fear of death disappeared, and with it their greed for life. That is why they had 'enough', 'more than enough.' In this community the competitive

> struggle which turns people into lonely individuals is ended, and the social chill of a heartless world vanishes.

These are the "peculiar people" (as the King James Version translates 1 Pt 2:9) who joined in the missional "dance" of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit along with one another for the sake of a broken world.

As Luke's second "Gospel" continues, the diverse community called "The Way" in the beginning and later "Christians," indeed expands to include women and men, young and old, rich and poor, and people from the global community.[24] In Luke's recording of the work of Paul and his missionary band in Philippi, a Roman colony and a military outpost, we see a robust example of the diversity of God's people. In Acts 16:13-15, Luke recounts the conversion of a wealthy Gentile woman. Acts 16:16-24 retells the story of Paul commanding an evil spirit to leave a slave girl who "her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling" (Acts 16:16). This angered her owners, who had Paul and Silas thrown in jail. While in jail in Acts 16:25-34, following an earthquake that shook open the doors of the prison, Paul stopped the frantic Roman jailer who was about to kill himself and invited the man, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31). Luke ends his commentary on the jailer's conversion with this. "He (the jailer) brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God" (Acts 16:34).

In these twenty-two verses from Acts 16, we witness the conversion of a wealthy Gentile woman, an enslaved Gentile woman, and a middle-class Roman soldier and his

[24] Acts 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22; 11:26

entire family. As William Barclay wrote, "No chapter in the Bible shows so well the all-embracing faith which Jesus Christ brought on men."[25]

Conclusion

Karl Rahner gives a stinging indictment of many Christian's creedal confession of the Trinity that is void of any robust theological understanding. He writes, "…despite their orthodox confession of the Trinity, Christians are, in their practical life, almost mere 'monotheists.' We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged."[26] Rahner rightly criticizes many Christians and churches for affirming their historic orthodoxy that has led to little more than words. However, orthodoxy rightly affirmed leads to orthopraxy. The amount of disunity in local churches confessing the Apostle's Creed is staggering. A declaration of belief in a diverse but unified Trinity without demonstrating a diverse but unified mission among the people of God is vanity.

The richness of perichoresis and its implications for the church are endless. The invitation to live in unity expressed through diversity becomes a part of the living witness of God's people. The tension between individuality and community in the Body of Christ finds resolution in perichoretic deference to the other. "Koinonia" is the Greek word used by Luke, Paul, John, and the unknown writer of the Book of Hebrews eighteen times.[27] It is a word that turbo-charges the idea of fellowship to imply a deep, authentic, intimate

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[25] William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminister Press, 1976) 5.

[26] "The Method and Structure of the Treatise "on the Triune God"." In *The Trinity,* Rahner, Karl., 10–11. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1967. http://dx.doi.org.dtl.idm.oclc.org/10.5040/9781474213240.ch-001.

[27] *Koinonia*, www.biblestudytools.com.

relationships with others. It is significantly deeper in meaning than camaraderie or friendship. Or, as has been said, "Everybody needs friends who love you but are not impressed by you." Perichoresis minimizes hierarchy in relationships and opens the door for "koinonia and mutual indwelling."[28]

Not only does perichoresis inform the life of a church from within, but it also shapes the mission of the church as she reaches out. Michael Moynagh, a pioneer of the fresh expressions of church movement, has championed the idea of "blended ecology" as a strategy for mission. The synergistic relationship between the established, inherited church and fresh expressions of church in a community cooperating for the wellness of the whole mission echoes perichoresis. Moynagh beautifully writes of the Trinity:

> The Father does not cling to his divinity, but gives it away to beget the Son. The process is eternal. Divinity never 'runs out' because the Father has an infinite supply, as it were, to pour into the Son...The Son receives this gift of divinity as something that constitutes his very being...The Son's obedience to the Father represents a self-giving back to the Father...The mutual self-giving of the Father and the Son is more than a giving to--a giving between the two of them. It becomes a giving out in the form of the third person. It is an outpouring of love for each other that overflows into the eternal procession of the Spirit.[29]

The perichoretic nature of the Trinity affirms a synergistic relationship between different forms of church as it holds together unity and diversity. The Church in her diverse expressions, from Christians gathering in the Gothic cathedrals of Europe to those meeting under the mango trees of South America, from Christ followers attracted to contemporary worship centers with flashing lights, and smoke of the megachurch to the

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[28] Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God,* 150.

[29] Michael Moynagh, *Church in Life: Innovation, Mission, and Ecclesiology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 145.

inked who gather in the tattoo shop are genuinely the Church when these gathered followers of Jesus live life together perichoretically.

John was the youngest of the twelve disciples, considered by many to be the author of one of the four Gospels, three letters, and the Book of Revelation. Yet, in the twenty-one chapters of the Gospel of John, he never reveals himself by using his name or even the pronoun "me" or "him." Instead, five times in his biography of the life of Jesus, he calls himself "The disciple whom Jesus loved."[30] The love of Jesus had so ravished John that he now, decades later, self-identifies as the much-loved disciple of Jesus.

This theme of God's love carries throughout his New Testament writings. For example, 1 Jn 4:7-8, 13-14: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love…By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world." After describing God as love, he connects this existential reality to priority of loving others. Using Jesus' language of abiding in John 15, the perichoretic relationship of the Trinity is on full display in verses 13-14. John uses the generic "God" to describe the One in whom Christians abide and then uses the word "Spirit" as the One who is the Christians assurance of an abiding relationship with God. John ends with a testimony to how these first-generation Christ followers bear witness to the Father sending the Son; Father, Son and Spirit in a divine choreography with the people of God sharing the love of God. These echo the brilliant words of Moltmann on the relationship of the community of God and the community of Christ:

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[30] John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20

> The open space of the perichoretic community of the triune God is the divine living space of the church. In the community of Christ and in the energies of the life-giving Spirit we experience God as *the broad place* which surrounds us from every side and brings us to the free unfolding of new life. In the love which affirms life we exist *in God* and *God in us*. The church is not just the space for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is the space indwelt by the whole Trinity. The whole Trinity is the living space of the church, not just the Holy Spirit.[31]

This is perichoresis at work in and through the Body and Bride of Christ. The choreography between the triune God and the people of God displays the wonder of God.

Just as God lovingly lives in unity and diversity, the Body of Christ, when she "gets it right," lives in this dynamic tension. For the witness of the Triune God to be clear, the missionary outposts known as local churches need to reflect both God's oneness and three-ness in her declaration and demonstration. Generative teams in a local church can express the perichoretic nature of God when they, too, live this tension.

In his hymn "We Give Immortal Praise," Isaac Watts, the writer, poet, hymnist, and pastor, penned the first three verses beautifully praising God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.[32] Left to itself, Watts might be accused of being a tri-theist. But his last verse, Watts cancels out such an indictment when he penned:

> Almighty God, to Thee
> Be endless honours done,
> The undivided Three,
> And the mysterious One:
> Where reason fails, with all her powers,
> There faith prevails, and love adores.

Heresy is avoided as Watts affirms the oneness of God living mysteriously as "undivided Three." This is perichoresis.

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[31] Jurgen Moltmann, *Experiences in Theology*, 330.

[32] *We Give Immortal Praise*, www.hymnary.org.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In one of the seminal works on adaptive leadership, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow define and describe adaptive leadership in this way:

> Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. The concept of thriving is drawn from evolutionary biology, in which a successful adaptation has three characteristics: (1) it preserves the DNA essential for the species' continued survival; (2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species current needs; and (3) it creates DNA arrangements to give the species' the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments. Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future.[1]

Practicing adaptive leadership in the local church likewise involves: (1) the capacity for the Church to preserve essential DNA; (2) the aptitude to discard or rearrange DNA that no longer serves the mission of the Church; and (3) the competence to create new DNA that will allow the Church to flourish in new ways in a challenging environment.

Their sentence, "Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future," is beneficial to the Church because it links together the

[1] Ronald A Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Press, 2009) 14.

rich tradition of the organization with the organization's future possibility and potential. Likewise, Tod Bolsinger has written, "Adaptive leadership is not finding a new inspiring vision but reframing an original or enduring vision of the organization that allows everyone to see a new, compelling future for their beloved organization that is worth sacrifice and commitment."[2] Adaptive work does not jettison tradition instead, it reframes and reuses it. Historian and theologian Jaroslav Pelikan famously wrote, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."[3] Adaptive leadership seeks to harness tradition while jettisoning traditionalism.

Sadly, the local church in most places in America seems to be lost in traditionalism and is in precipitous decline because of a refusal or inability to adapt to new challenges of contemporary culture. A 2021 survey of 15,278 religious congregations across the United States by Faith Communities Today (FACT), revealed a median decline in attendance of 7% between 2015 and 2020.[4] The survey found that half of the country's estimated 350,000 religious congregations had 65 or fewer people in weekly worship attendance. This was a drop of half from 2000, when the median attendance level was 137. "As Scott Thumma, director of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research and the survey's author, put it: 'The dramatically increasing number of congregations below 65 attendees with a continued rate of decline should be cause for

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[2] Tod Bolsinger. *Tempered Resilience* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2020) 174.

[3] Jaroslav Pelikan. *The Vindication of Tradition: The 1983 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities* **(**New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984) 65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5hk0sg.7.

[4] Yonat Shimron. "Study: Attendance Hemorrhaging at Small and Midsize US Congregations," Religion News Service. https://religionnews.com/2021/10/14/study-attendance-at-small-and-midsize-us-congregations-is-hemorrhaging/.

concern among religious communities.'" This survey suggests that the local church in America has not adapted well to its changing environment.

In the United Methodist Church, the vitality of the local church in America continues to wane. In the 2010 "Call to Action" Towers-Watson report, it revealed that approximately 15% of the approximately 32,000 American United Methodist churches scored high in vitality on a vitality index around five areas: pastoral leadership, lay empowerment, transcendent and contextual worship, life-enhancing small groups and local and global mission.[5] This is good. Sadly, these 15% of United Methodist churches were outliers. This study also revealed that 85% of the American United Methodist Churches did not score as vital. Local church vitality has continued to be elusive in the United Methodist Church in the United States more than a decade later. Adapting to the changes in and challenges of culture is not a skill that church leaders have honed.

As it relates to pastoral leadership, the narrative around clergy often heard in local churches in the American Church is sadly common. "When Pastor Shari was here, our church was amazing. She was a dynamic preacher and great leader, but she got moved. The Bishop sent us Pastor Jorge, and frankly, he could not preach or lead himself out of a wet paper bag. Gratefully, we ran him off, and by the grace of God, they sent us Pastor Wes. He was a wonderful pastor, and the church did well under his leadership." Sadly, this narrative is the default of many congregations, and raises many questions. Has our system of discovering, developing, and deploying clergy fostered this sad storyline? Have the internal systems of our local churches, from committees and boards to staff and

[5] Jorge Acevedo, *Vital: Churches Changing Communities and the World* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012) 19-20.

volunteers, fostered this kind of congregational folklore? Has our inability to adapt stifled vitality in the local church?

Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky wrote, "As our colleague, Jeff Lawrence poignantly says, 'There is no such thing as a dysfunctional organization. Because every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve the results it currently gets.'"[6] Our systems for both laity and clergy leadership do not foster vitality for most local churches. Ironically, this narrative of good leader followed by bad leader seems to be the prevailing leadership story not just in the local church but also in corporate America, sports, education, denominations, and almost every human organizational endeavor. Whether it is the CEO, coach, principal, or Bishop, the woman or man at the top, the heroic solo leader often bears the bulk for the responsibility of the organization's vitality. Is there a better way? The wisdom of adaptive leadership theory testifies to the unhealth of heroic solo leadership for both clergy and laity and the prudence of a better way, the way of generative team leadership charged with leading through adaptive challenges.

Fundamentals of Adaptive Leadership

Distinguishing Between Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

Core to adaptive leadership is the capacity to distinguish between "technical problems" and "adaptive challenges." Heifitz and Linsky championed this critical distinction. A technical problem can be solved with information and expertise or enlisted

[6] Jeff Lawrence quoted in Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Cambridge Leadership Associates, 2009), Kindle.

outside the organization. For example, a church needs to update its new website. They have staff or volunteers who can either solve this problem themselves or enlist one of the plethoras of website companies to complete the task. An adaptive challenge for this same church would be, "How does our church use this new digital resource to make more and better disciples of Jesus?" This kind of challenge requires adaptation and insights beyond a team's capacity and standard operating procedures. No amount of judicatory officials, conferences, books, and podcasts cannot solve these challenges for a local church either. With adaptive challenges, "Leadership…is called into action when there is a problem outside of the organization that needs to be addressed and the organization needs to change in order to take on that challenge."[7]

Sharon Dalos Parks distinguishes between technical problems and adaptive challenges this way:

> Technical problems (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand. In contrast, adaptive challenges require new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior. In this view, leadership is the activity of mobilizing people to address adaptive challenges—those challenges that cannot be resolved by expert knowledge and routine management alone. Adaptive challenges often appear as swamp issues— tangled, complex problems composed of multiple systems that resist technical analysis and thus stand in contrast to the high, hard ground issues that are easier to address but where less is at stake for the organization or the society. They ask for more than changes in routine or mere performance. They call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values.[8]

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[7] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 16.

[8] Sharon Dalos Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach in a Complex World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press. 2014) 10.

"Swamp issues" accurately describe the "parting of the Red Sea," adaptive challenges that contemporary local churches daily face as they seek to faithful to the Gospel mandate to make disciples in all places in an ever-changing culture.

"We" Are Better Than "Me"

Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow are blunt about it. "Don't do it alone."[9] This is both their caution and their wisdom. This perilous work of addressing adaptive challenges where the solutions to problems where the answer is unknown require colleagues with diverse gifts and experiences where difference is harnessed as an asset. "Find partners who will share the dangers and the exposure."[10]

In the sixth of his seven habits of highly effective people, Stephen Covey calls this the principle of synergy. "Simply defined, it means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts… synergy is everywhere in nature. If you plant two plants close together, the roots cold mingle and improve the quality of the soil so that both plants will grow better than if they were separated. If you put two pieces of wood together, they will hold much more than the total of the weight held by each separately. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. One plus one equals three or more."[11] Adaptive leadership harnesses synergy to solve adaptive challenges.

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[9] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 41.

[10] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 42.

[11] Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lesssons in Personal Change* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1989) 262-263.

Get on the Balcony

All organizations have the innate capacity to become "tenacious quickly."[12] Rituals for reward become codified, and how decisions are made becomes routine. The organizational system, by design, whether intentional or not, will seek to sustain itself. Adaptive leadership advocates the discipline of getting on the balcony. "The single most important skill and most undervalued capacity for exercising adaptive leadership is diagnosis."[13] This perspective of the "balcony" is contrasted with the "dance floor." Leaders have a propensity to "live, move and have their being" in the activity of leading the organization. Traveling back and forth from the "dance floor" to the "balcony" creates the capacity for accurate diagnosis.

The Process of Adaptive Leadership

How does adaptive leadership work? In adaptive leadership, high-trust teams tackle challenges in building, refining, and improving processes through three important and distinctive practices: observe, interpret and intervene (Figure 4).[14] First, the team carefully and accurately observes the challenges. Alongside trust, the skill of contextual intelligence is required for this kind of careful work by leaders.[15] Unbridled honesty, freed from personal agenda, is essential to identify the barriers to organizational thriving.

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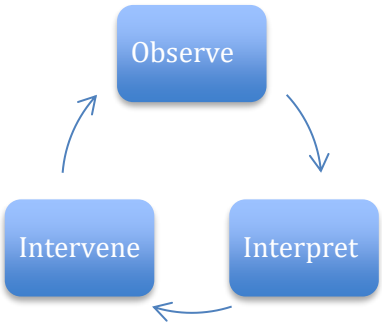
[12] Heifetz, Ronald A, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 50.

[13] Heifetz, Ronald A, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 7.

[14] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 32.

[15] Leonard Sweet and Michael Beck, *Contextual Intelligence: Unlocking the Ancient Secret to Mission on the Front Lines* (Oviedo, FL: HigherLife Development Services, Inc., 2020).

Second, the team must make a careful and thoughtful interpretation of the insights learned, being careful not draw conclusions too quickly. Multiple hypotheses are examined in this stage. Third, based on careful and accurate observation and tested theories, the team designs an intervention to the adaptive challenge. In summary, "When



you realize that your organization's aspirations cannot be attained through current approaches, the principles of Adaptive Leadership allow you to diagnose, interrupt, and innovate – in short, build capacity to solve complex problems. Adaptive Leadership is purposeful evolution in real time."[16]

Figure 4. *The Adaptive Leadership Process*.

Being an Adaptive Team Leader

Fundamental to adaptive leadership theory is the idea that leadership is an "activity" more than a "personal set of characteristics" or a "position."[17] With this in mind, leadership from an adaptive perspective can be learned by anyone. The CEO and

[16] "Adaptive Leadership," Cambridge Leadership Associates, accessed November 6, 2021, https://cambridge-leadership.com/adaptive-leadership/.

[17] Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1999) 20.

the custodian can and should both engage in the leadership of an organization. The idea of the set-aside, heroic solo leader who has all the answers and strategies to the organization's problems and challenges is popular, and can foster "both self-delusion and irresponsibility" on the part of the leader. Moreover, at the same time, it also, sadly promotes learned helplessness for those who do not consider themselves a leader. Many of the best ideas are "left under the table" and never considered. Everyone loses, especially the organization.

Drawing from biology, adaptive leadership, like evolution, relies on diversity. "By diversifying the gene pool, nature markedly increases the odds that some members of the species will have the ability to survive in a changing ecosystem. The secret of evolution is variation, which in organizational terms, could be called distributed or collective intelligence. For an organization, adaptive leadership would build a culture that values diverse views and relies less on central planning and the genius of the few at the top, where the odds of adaptive success go down."[18] For adaptive work -- work where there is no obvious solution -- to be done, diversity is essential so that various inputs are considered.

Being a System

Nevertheless, in organizations, there is almost always someone who is the "designated leader." It is the responsibility of this person who oversees a team of women and men to organize the team's work. The authors of *The Practice of Adaptive*

[18] *Becoming an Adaptive Leader*. www.lifelongfaith.com. https://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_an_adaptive_leader.pdf. 2011.

Leadership champion the idea that this person needs to see themselves "as a system."[19] This requires healthy and accurate self-awareness and self-discipline on the part of the leader. "People who lead adaptive change most successfully have a diagnostic mindset about themselves as well as about the situation. That is, they are continually striving to understand what is going on inside, how they are changing over time and how they as a system interact with their organization as a system."[20]

Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow suggest five practices for a leader to better and more accurately understand their own personal "system:"[21]

1. Identify your loyalties. We all have colleagues, community, and ancestors who vie for our attention and loyalty. Awareness of and prioritizing these loyalties allows the leader to lead intentionally and unfettered by blind loyalties. It also allows the leader to name his or her part that has contributed to the challenges their organization is seeking to adapt.
2. Know your tuning. "Your tuning derives from many different things: your childhood experiences, genetic predispositions, cultural background, gender, and loyalty identifications with various current and historical groups."[22] Self-awareness allows the leader to know what his or her "triggers" are as they lead through adaptive challenges with their teams.
3. Broaden your bandwidth. Adaptive leadership requires that the leader has a "… repertoire of techniques for moving adaptive change forward…"[23] Leading people demands the leader have more than a hammer in his or her toolbox. Expanding one's bandwidth is essential for building adaptive teams.
4. Understand your roles. Leaders have roles assigned to them, usually implicitly. Recognizing these roles allows the leader to harness them for the organization's good and step into other roles not assigned to the leader but helpful for the organization's wellbeing.
5. Articulate your purposes. "Taking on adaptive challenges is difficult and dangerous work. The only reason we can imagine you would want to do this kind of work is to serve purposes that matter to you deeply. Identifying your higher

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[19] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 181.

[20] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 184.

[21] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* Chapters 14-18.

[22] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 195.

[23] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 205.

> (orienting) purpose -- figuring out what is so important to you that you'll be willing to put yourself in peril -- is a key element in the process of understanding yourself as a system. When you understand you're orienting purpose, you can understand and make day-to-day decisions in that larger context, and you can make tough decisions to subordinate other important purposes to that one."[24] Getting clear about your personal and organizational focus is important on-going work.

Mastering these five disciplines gives the leader who champions adaptive processes the healthy capacity to lead a generative team. Addressing adaptive challenges requires leaders who have mastered these practices.

Tempered Resilience

Tod Bolsinger uses the metaphor of blacksmithing to describe the growing of tempered resilience for the leader leading adaptive change. Like the blacksmith who takes hardened steel, and through an arduous process of heating, hammering, and cooling steel, forging it into something valuable and beautiful, leaders go through a similar straining process to grow in their capacity to lead through adaptive challenges. "Leadership, therefore, is always about the transformation and growth of a people – starting with the leader – to develop the resilience and adaptive capacity to wisely cut through resistance and accomplish the mission of the group…So, to lead, especially in the face of resistance, requires that we develop resilience."[25]

Harnessing the blacksmithing process as an image, Bolsinger suggests six stages of growth for becoming a tempered leader. They are:[26]

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[24] Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership.* 221.
[25] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 6.

[26] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 50.

1. Working: Leaders are formed by leading. Furthermore, by leading, Bolsinger means the real-life laboratory of the work and not the sterile environment of "…the standard development experience (usually in some off-site, university-like setting) …" that "…is divorced from the context and challenge of the work one is leading…"[27] It is my observation that many church leaders are looking in vain for the "silver bullet," in a conference, workshop, or podcast that will solve the adaptive challenges of their church. Instead, it is the crucible of the work where leaders are formed.
2. Heating: Strength is forged in self-reflection. "If the actual task of leading is the *shop* for forming a leader, the forge that makes the leader ready for the forming is the fire of *vulnerable self-refection*."[28] This means the leader must be willing to be vulnerable admitting one's weaknesses and limitation as well as acknowledging one's strengths and capacities.
3. Holding: Vulnerable leadership requires relational security. Bolsinger calls these "solid, safe relationships" and "thick, heavy relationships."[29] An adaptive team leader needs a constellation of anchoring relationships to help ground the leader, especially with the reality of organizational setbacks and pushback as he or she leads through adaptive challenges.
4. Hammering: Stress makes a leader. There seems to be something internal to all humans to want to resist pain, and the stress pain brings to one's life. The adaptive leader is by no means exempt from this default. However, it is stress that tempers the leader if he or she allows it. For church leaders, the rich tradition of spiritual disciplines and a rule of life become tools for managing stress and allowing it to build resilience.
5. Hewing: Resilience takes practice. For example, blacksmithing begins with cold hard steel, and after a long, arduous process of heating and hammering, ultimately, it transforms the steel into something valuable and beautiful. Likewise, building adaptive capacity for the leader's organization is generated through practicing this process repeatedly as a team.
6. Tempering: Resilience comes through a rhythm of leading and not leading. "This rhythm is the process for a tempered leader: *heating* through work and reflection, *holding* of good relationships both personally and professionally, the *hammering* of spiritual practices and the practice of leadership, and the *tempering* that comes through cooling periods of rest and release from leading and then repeated."[30] This process tempers a leader.

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[27] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 51.

[28] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 79.

[29] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 105.

[30] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 196-197.

Like the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, this process is not a "one and done," "check the box" list. Instead, this is a lifelong process of working and reworking to become a robust leader ready to lead teams that do adaptive work. "Resilience is not something that can be mustered in a moment of rising to the occasion. It is formed over a long period before the crisis of testing so that it can continue the transformation during the moment of challenge."[31]

In the crucible of the local church I have led, I have learned a spiritual life principle that also applies to cultivating personal leadership capacity. The principle is: "What you do during days of peace and serenity will carry you during days of conflict and chaos." This is true of individuals and teams. Intentionally practicing these forging disciplines builds the capacity to navigate the choppy waters of adaptive challenges. If the leader and his or her organization have not been building adaptive leadership capacity before a crisis hits the organization, leading through the crisis will be profoundly tricky, if not impossible.

What Hat Are You Wearing?

In my 26-plus years as the Lead Pastor at a complex, multi-site church, my colleagues and I have developed language to help distinguish between the roles I and others play on the team. Getting clear and intentional about roles helps short-circuit misunderstandings on the team. The tool harnesses the idea of "wearing a hat." Sometimes when the positional leader is having a conversation with a teammate, and he or she is not sure what role or "hat" the supervisor is wearing. "Is she speaking to me

[31] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 30.

now as my 'boss," my 'colleague,' or my 'friend?'" Getting the role intentionally aligned with the conversation helps both the supervisor speak clearly, and the teammate hear accurately. It has become commonplace in our team culture to hear, "So, what hat are you wearing right now?" or "I am wearing my supervisor's hat right now." Clarity around distinguishing roles is essential in cultivating a healthy team.

Inner Life Guides

Adaptive leaders who lead generative teams doing adaptive work need to be lifelong learners and women or men who intentionally enlist inner life guides. These guides come alongside the leader to speak into and sharpen the leader's emotional, spiritual, physical, and relational wellbeing. Tod Bolsinger calls these "backstage" relationships.[32] He gets very prophetic when he writes, "...to lead alone is reckless and arrogant; it is foolish and dangerous to both self and others. To lead alone usually results in either a failure of nerve or a failure of heart, which is to squander the valuable time, energy, and commitment of organizations and followers. And therefore, to lead people without partners and mentors, full support of family and friends, and a lifetime commitment at every moment that you are leading of being in either psychological therapy, coaching, spiritual direction, or mentoring would be considered leadership malpractice."[33]

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[32] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 114.

[33] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 128.

A Band of Brothers and Sister Soulmates

Adaptive challenges also demand that the leader have a band of brothers or sisters to walk alongside leader, not for expertise but for emotional and spiritual support. Alongside "backstage" relationships, Bolsinger suggests two other kinds of relationships.

First, he suggests that adaptive leaders also need peers, teammates, partners and colleagues. He calls these "front stage" relationships.[34] These are the women and men with whom the adaptive leader does the work. Bolsinger calls these persons "allies." These are not necessarily the front leader's friends but those critical persons committed to the organization's transformation.

Second, Bolsinger reminds adaptive leaders that they need "off stage" relationships alongside "front stage" and "back stage" relationships.[35] These "off stage" relationships are those rare friendships where the person is more committed to the leader personally than professionally.

In the life of King David, the leader of Israel, a historian chronicled his life from his humble beginning as the unnamed and unnumbered son of Jesse to his ascension to the throne as the greatest king of the Hebrew people. He captured tales of David's rise to fame as he slew the giant from Gath, Goliath, as well as his on-again, off-again relationship with the first King of Israel, Saul. The chronicler gives a list of his warriors, religious comrades, and political allies. One of the last names reported was "Hushai the Arkite." (1 Chronicles 37:33b). He was called "the King's friend." Not to be lost in this

[34] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 112.

[35] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 118.

simple notation is the straightforward truth that King David, a poet, warrior, and king, needed an "off stage" person in his life that was simply known as a "friend."

This constellation of front stage, back stage and off stage relationships build a relational matrix fit for the challenges of leading adaptive challenges and teams and life in general. These kinds of essential relationships are necessary to live a flourishing life.

Building an Adaptive Team

Though Patrick Lencioni is not technically considered a proponent of adaptive leadership theory, his work is beneficial for building teams that address adaptive challenges. Lencioni "…is one of the founders of The Table Group and is the pioneer of the organizational health movement. He is the author of 11 books, which have sold over 6 million copies and been translated into more than 30 languages. As President of the Table Group, Pat spends his time speaking and writing about leadership, teamwork, and organizational health and consulting with executives and their teams." [36]

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Lencioni's groundbreaking work is *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. [37] In this "leadership fable," Lencioni studies the "diseases" or "dysfunctions" to which teams can easily fall prey. He identifies five dysfunctions that "… form an inter-related model, making susceptibility to even one of them potentially lethal for the success of a team."[38]

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[36] *Patrick Lencioni*. "The Table Group." November 30, 2021. https://www.tablegroup.com/pat/.

[37] Patrick Lencioni. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass) 2002.

[38] Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 184.

The graphic (figure 5) names the five team dysfunctions within the pyramid and identifies the behavioral root cause for the dysfunction.

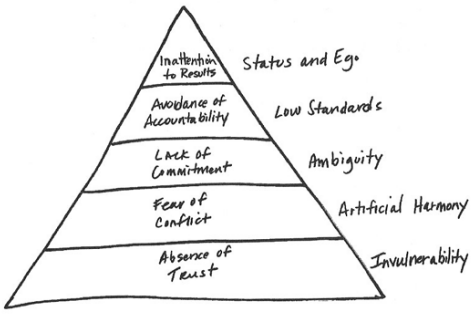

Figure 5. The Five Dysfunctions of a Team.

The first dysfunction is an absence of trust. When teams are unwilling or unable to be vulnerable with one another, trust cannot be built. As a result, the ability to celebrate victories and, most importantly, address weaknesses, mistakes, and failures are left unexamined and unresolved.

The second dysfunction of a team is a fear of conflict. Teams that do not trust one another get stuck in a system of artificial harmony. The inability to have noisy meetings where passionate, unfiltered dialogue occurs leaves a team dwarfed and unhealthy. Many of the team's best ideas are left "under the table" without vigorous debate.

The third dysfunction of a team is a lack of commitment. The inability to have healthy conflict ensures a lack of passionate buy-in to the work of the team. Instead, members passively acquiesce and embrace ambiguity as the standard.

The fourth dysfunction of a team is an avoidance of accountability. When ambiguity in the team's work is present, and no clear course of action is established, team

members will not hold one another accountable for their actions. In this kind of team environment, the bar for standards is low.

This leads to the fifth dysfunction of a team, inattention to results. In this dysfunctional, unhealthy culture, "… team members put their individual needs (such as ego career development or recognition) or even the needs of their own decisions above the collective goals of the team."[39] Status and ego are normal in this team culture.

Having identified the chain reaction of dysfunctional behaviors of a team, Lencioni inverts the dysfunctional principles to give a better, more positive, and healthy way of building teams. He invites us to imagine teams where:[40]

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on the achievement of collective results.

This is holy and healthy work of functional teams capable of addressing adaptive challenges. Bolsinger wrote, "Great teams run on 'psychological safety' that is built through empathy, good listening, and communication…"

The Ideal Team Player

Another of Patrick Lencioni's books, *The Ideal Team Player*, can be very helpful in the work of building teams capable of addressing adaptive challenges.[41] His work on five dysfunctions is helpful with the "we" dynamics of team building, but his ideal team

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[39] Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 189.

[40] Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 189-190.

[41] Patrick Lencioni. *The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate Three Essential Virtues* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2016).

player work focuses on the "me" dynamics of team building. Lencioni argues that three virtues are needed for "…making teamwork a cultural reality."[42] Those virtues are humility, hunger and smarts. He refers "…to these as virtues because the word *virtue* is a synonym for the nouns *quality* and *asset*, but it also connotes the idea of integrity and morality. Humility, which is the most important of the three, is certainly a virtue in the deepest sense of the word. Hunger and people smarts fall more into the quality or asset category. So, the word virtue best captures them all."[43]

It has been said, "Humility is the capacity to set forward when your name is called, and you have the gifts. It's the capacity to step back when your name is called and you do not." Great team players get this critical distinction. For Lencioni, the virtuously humble team player is quick to give credit and attention to other contributors and hesitant to seek attention for oneself. "Humility is the single greatest and most important attribute of being a team player."[44] An impulse to be resisted by team leaders is to hire and applaud talent over virtuous humility. This would be catastrophic for building a team capable of addressing adaptive challenges.

"Hungry people are always looking for more. More things to do. More to learn. More responsibility to take on. Hungry people almost never have to be pushed by a manager to work harder because they are self-motivated and diligent. They are constantly thinking about the next step and the next opportunity. And they load the idea that they might be perceived as slackers."[45] Now, the kind of hunger that Lencioni champions for

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[42] Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player*, 155.

[43] Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player*, 155.

[44] Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player*, 157.

[45] Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player*, 159.

healthy teams are void of selfish ambition and gain. On the contrary, it is the kind of hunger that yearns for the team to win.

According to Lencioni, a smart team player must be nuanced and explained for clarity. By smart, he does not simply mean intellectual capacity but rather "…a person's common sense about people."[46] Smarts speaks to a person's capacity to engage in healthy emotional ways and know how to respond in a variety of social environments.

Tod Bolsinger accurately describes the opportunity teams and team players have when he pens, "…developing adaptive capacity, that is, the personal and organizational transformation of leaders and their people to apply and adapt their core values in a rapidly changing context, is the greatest challenge of adaptive leadership."[47] Humble, hungry, and smart team players can champion team cultures where trust, unfiltered conflict around ideas, high commitment to decisions and plans of action, holding one another accountable for delivering against those plans, and focusing on the achievement of collective results is possible. These ideal team players serving on high-functioning teams can grapple with even the most challenging and dangerous adaptive challenges.

Conclusion

On October 15, 2021, Mike Greenberg was talking on his ESPN radio show "Greeny" with several former National Football League players turned sports analysts.[48]

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[46] Lencioni, *The Ideal Team Player*, 160.

[47] Bolsinger, *Tempered Resilience*, 18.

[48] Mike Greenberg. *Hour 1: Fixing Baseball*. www.espn.com. October 15, 2021. www.espn.com/espnradio/newyork/podcast/archive/_/id/29552517.

He was discussing with them Tom Brady, quarterback of the Tampa Bay Bucs and considered by many to be the G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time). Mike described Tom with a phrase "force multiplier." Mike used this phrase to describe athletes who have the gift of making everybody around them even better. Michael Jordan was also described as a force multiplier on the radio that morning.

A "force multiplier" is a term used in the military not to describe a person but rather the subtle habits or capacities of a group or team. The Dictionary of Military Associated Terms defines force multiplier as "a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force in that it enables the probability of successful mission accomplishment."[49] This is the often intangible "edge" that makes military victory possible. One article said:

> Since the age of Napoleon—and likely going back to the beginning of warfare, battles were often decided by the side that brought the most troops and firepower to the fight. Since that time there have been notable examples where a numerically inferior force—even by a significant margin—won the battle. The success of the inferior force is often due to factors other than numbers and firepower: elements that could include weather, season, terrain, fortifications, mobility, air superiority, surprise, and relative combat effectiveness. These factors are called force multipliers.[50]

The article went on to describe the intangibles that create victory on the battle field in military settings. This phrase has also been borrowed for the corporate setting to describe the intangibles that create victory in the boardroom.

The way Mike Greenberg used "force multiplier" when he personalized it around Tom Brady can be appreciated because this phrase also beautifully captures a spiritual

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[49] *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. S.v. "force multiplier." https://www.thefreedictionary.com/force+multiplier

[50] Brandy Moore. *How to Win While at a Serious Disadvantage: The Force Multiplier*. www.victorystrategies.com. February 4, 2019. https://www.victory-strategies.com/wisdom/winning.

leader at his or her best. Tom Brady made the New England Patriots and the Tampa Bay Bucs World Champions in a highly competitive sport. He has done this on two teams, spread out over 20-plus years. A force multiplier in sports moves beyond simple physical prowess to intangibles like attitude, work ethic, accountability, and trust creation. A "force multiplier leader" is someone who can bring both the tangible and intangible skills to cultivate a "championship team."

However, "force multiplier" by definition moves beyond the leader to a team that works together in such a way that victory occurs despite enormous challenges. They can address complex, even dangerous adaptive challenges. Adaptive teams are "force multipliers" who live and lead differently.

Spiritual Leadership Inc. is a ministry that embraces adaptive leadership theory. [51] They have as their mission to come alongside spiritual leaders and help them develop three skills. The capacity to (1) build generative teams, (2) who create transformational cultures and, (3) develop fruitful disciple-making processes. Yet, most pastors are evaluated by their boards and judicatories by their pastoral skills of things like preaching, congregational care, and church management. They are rewarded (or penalized) for these kinds pastoral skills. Sadly, the three less tangible skills of building teams, creating cultures, and developing fruitful processes are seldom considered or even evaluated in contemporary church life. Yet, they are the "force multipliers" that spiritual leaders need as they tackle the enormous adaptive challenges of contemporary life with their teams.

[51] www.spiritual-leadership.org

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

In the previous four chapters, I have sought to build a biblical, historical, theological, and interdisciplinary foundation to undergird my project and its findings. My project was a six-week seminar entitled "Building Generative Teams." It was held with six newer and emerging leaders from the three campuses of Grace Church. Questionnaires, journals and interviews were harnessed to validate my research. As a primarily qualitative research project, my goal was to persuade, motivate, and equip the participants to resist heroic solo leadership and embrace the building of generative teams for congregational viability and sustainability.

My narrative greatly informed this project. I am a first-generation follower of Jesus who grew up in a military home. My father spent twenty-five years serving our country in the United States Air Force. His "leadership style" was command and control and hierarchical. He was "large and in charge," and his wife and three children understood it well. After my conversion to Christ, a few days before my eighteenth birthday and my calling to vocational ministry at age twenty, I brought with me this unchecked propensity to lead from a place of positional leadership. Following seminary, I took my first appointment as an Associate Pastor, and I frankly dreamed of the day when I would have my church and be "large and in charge" too.

In 1996, Bishop Hasbrouck Hughes appointed me to Grace United Methodist Church (aka Grace Church) in Cape Coral, Florida. After twelve years of sitting in a subordinate seat on the leadership grid, my name would finally be at the top of the organizational chart. Little did I know at age thirty-six and never having served in the Lead Pastor role that the next ten years would profoundly challenge my unchecked propensity towards what I am calling "heroic solo leadership." From 1996 to 2006, Grace Church grew by more than 700% in weekly worship attendance and by 650% in giving. A staff of eight had ballooned to more than forty. A second campus had been added. A Family Life Center to house a preschool of one hundred children was built, and plans to purchase a $6,000,000 grocery store to build a community center were underway. New ministries of recovery, children, youth, and adults emerged regularly. It was then that my heroic solo leadership hit its lid. In the summer of 2006, I almost left Grace Church because I could no longer "spin the plates." By the providence and grace of God, Wes Olds, one of our newer pastors, introduced me to Spiritual Leadership, Inc. and their ministry that helps churches and ministries build healthy teams that cultivate transformational cultures and fruitful disciple-making processes. For the last sixteen years, our staff, leaders, and I have been students and practitioners of this better way of building generative teams for our church's vitality and sustainability.

The story recounted by the author of the Book of Exodus in chapter 18 of Moses' strategic and timely conversation with his father-in-law Jethro served as my biblical foundation. In the narrative, Moses had an unchecked propensity towards heroic solo leadership. From morning to evening, he had to judge the people's disputes and inform them of God's decrees. Jethro's analysis of Moses' pace was unfavorable. "This is not

good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself" (Ex 18:17-18). Moses' sage gave the weary leader a new dispersed leadership strategy that I call building of generative teams. Wisely, Moses heeded his father-in-law.

The Reverend John Wesley and the early Methodists served as my historical foundation. Though often depicted as a heroic solo leader, he instead built generative teams to lead the explosive Methodist revival, in the British Isles but "across the pond" in the emerging new lands of North America. While cultivating a transformational culture and with entire sanctification as the bullseye of the Methodist disciple-making system, teams of women and men from every stratum of British life were discovered, developed, and deployed to join the Wesleyan movement. By the end of Mr. Wesley's life in 1791, there were nearly 115,000 people in the vital and sustained disciple-making ministry of the early Methodists.

The concept of perichoresis served as my theological support for building generative teams. Often called "the circle dance" to describe the choreography between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit living mysteriously as One in three and three in One, perichoresis beautifully pictures the Trinity as a Team. More recent theological thinkers like Jürgen Moltmann and Stephen Seamands have used the perichoretic relationship of the Trinity as a metaphor for not only the relational and social dynamics within the Godhead but also the Body of Christ. Followers of Jesus are invited into the "circle dance" as they together embody the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven through declaration and demonstration.

My project was also greatly supported by adaptive leadership theory that Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky championed. Adaptive challenges are profoundly different from technical problems. Adaptive challenges cannot rely on common knowledge and processes but require new kinds of insight and innovation discovered by high-trust teams. A generative team needs a generative leader who must embody the principles and practices of adaptive leadership, spreading the "good infection" to the team.

My research project harnessed these four foundations to persuade, motivate, and equip the participants to resist heroic solo leadership and embrace cultivating generative teams for organizational vitality and sustainability. What follows are an explanation of my methodology, the implementation of the actual project, a summary of learnings from the project, and a conclusion of all my work, including possible future studies on this topic.

Methodology

To help me test my hypothesis, emerging leaders were nominated by the Operational Team of Grace Church to participate in a seminar. The Operational Team comprises the Lead Pastor (myself) and three Campus Pastors who lead the day-to-day adaptive challenges and technical problems of Grace Church. These pastors are also the appointed clergy from the Florida Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Wes Olds (Cape Coral Campus Pastor) and I (Lead Pastor) are Elders in the Florida Conference. Shari Lacey (Fort Myers Shores Campus Pastor) and Arlene Jackson (Fort Myers Central campus) are Local Pastors. This team settled on six emerging leaders from each of the three campuses who were not yet positional leaders but showed great promise

to become one. I emailed each potential nominee to schedule a face-to-face invitation (see Appendix A). All six nominees were interviewed by me and accepted the invitation to participate in the seminar.

The demographics and church leadership experience of each participant was as follows. Participant one was a middle-aged male who serves on a recovery and hospitality teams. Participant two was a retired male who leads a feeding ministry team. Participant three was a middle-aged male and a member of an operational team that leads outreach ministries. Participant four was a middle-aged woman who leads a cooking team. Participant five was a middle-aged male who serves on staff part-time as a ministry intern and is in training to be a pastor. Finally, participant six was a middle-aged woman who is a member of an operational team that leads outreach ministries. All six participants completed all six sessions. Three of the six participants missed 1 session because of family emergencies or situations but they each watched a video of the entire session on the week following their absence.

The project format was a six-week one-hour and thirty-minute seminar entitled "Building Generative Teams." We met from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings in room three of the Cape Coral campus of Grace Church. In session one, each participant was given a seminar booklet (see Appendix B), a journal, and a writing pen and then filled out an "Informed Consent Form" (see Appendix C). Bottled water and snacks were provided for each session. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation of the material (see Appendix D) was projected onto a TV to assist the learning environment.

Three data points were utilized to test my hypothesis. First, "Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires" (see Appendix E) were completed by each participant. In

session one, before we began the seminar's content, the pre-seminar questionnaire was given. Then, after all the seminar content had been shared in session six, a post-seminar questionnaire was given. The questions were identical, and I hoped to measure change in cognitive understanding, attitude, and practice about the lack of vitality and sustainability of heroic solo leadership and the capacity for vitality and sustainability of building generative teams.

The second data point was a "Focused Journaling Exercise" (Appendix F). A journal and pen were given to each participant at session one, and the instructions were that at the end of each session, reflection questions would be shared for them to write about in the week between sessions. I did inform them that following the seminar's completion, I would ask them to reflect on insights from their journal exercise.

The third data point for my research was "In-depth individual Focused Interviews" (see Appendix G). Following the six sessions, I scheduled Zoom or face-to-face in-depth individual focused interviews with all six participants. To standardize my data collection, I asked each participant six questions and took notes. At each of these interviews, I also asked for and received feedback about learnings from their weekly journaling exercises.

Implementation

The basic format of each meeting was sharing of individual prayer concerns followed by an opening prayer. "Glory sightings," where we had seen "God show up and show off" that week," were shared as well. Sessions one through five had a three to five-minute video with a discussion. Session six had a twenty-one-minute video. Each video

was selected to spur thought and conversation about the nature of leadership and teams. This was followed by a lesson I taught using PowerPoint on that week's theme. At the end of each lesson, that week's journal questions were reviewed. The conversations during each of the sessions were robust and thoughtful. There was an excellent spirit that I would describe as fellow pilgrims on a learning journey together.

Session one was entitled "An Introduction to Leadership in the Church." An introductory exercise was given for each participant and me to introduce ourselves and share what we loved most about Grace Church. Next, a quick review of the six-week seminar was given, followed by the participant's assignments for each week. Each participant completed the pre-seminar questionnaire and the informed consent form. The video "The Art of Possibility" with Benjamin Zander was shown, followed by a robust conversation on its content and application for our leadership. Two group discussion questions on leadership served as a segue to the lesson, "An Introduction to Leadership in the Church." Four major biblical themes were covered: God as Leader, Jesus as Leader, The Holy Spirit as Leader, and Men and Women as Leaders. At the end of session one, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions and comments for the evening were made, and we were dismissed.

Session two was entitled "Biblical Foundation –Moses and the Consequences of a Burned-Out Leader." After welcoming everyone back, we shared prayer concerns for each participant and we prayed. Glory sightings from the week led to the video, "The Living Bridges of Meghalaya," with the question, "What does this video teach us about leadership?" in mind. A group discussion on great biblical leaders and whether leaders are born or made led to vigorous conversation. Using Exodus 18:13-27 as our biblical

text, a lesson entitled "A Biblical Case Study of a Worn Out Leader" was given by me. In this lesson, we slowly examined the exchange between a worn-out leader named Moses and his father-in-law Jethro. Jethro's counsel was two-fold. First, Moses' pace was unsustainable, and second, a dispersed leadership could lead to effectiveness for the leader and his mammoth assignment of leading the wandering Hebrews. Six leadership insights were gleaned from the story. To end session two, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions and comments for the evening were made, and we were dismissed.

Session three was "Historical Foundation – John Wesley and the People Called Methodists." Again after prayer concerns for ourselves and our loved ones, we prayed together. Glory sightings were given, followed by the video "How Wolves Change Rivers." A more robust conversation on the video was followed by more conversation about how one leader can change an organizational ecosystem. This led to a group discussion about great leaders in history and how great teams are formed. The lesson began with a look at the remarkable ministry results of the Rev. John Wesley's death in 1791. Then we went back to the beginning of his life with a look at Mr. Wesley's formative years at the Epworth parsonage and Oxford. This was followed by considering his four life-shaping events: His ministry failure in Georgia as a missionary, his heart-warming experience at Aldersgate in London, his Pentecostal encounter at a prayer meeting at Fedder Lane in London, and his exposure and embracing of field preaching through the ministry of Evangelist George Whitfield in Bristol. Each of these formative elements shaped not only Mr. Wesley's life but also the ministry he led. Finally, Mr. Wesley's disciple-making strategy were considered where we learned that he was wise

enough to discover, develop, and deploy every Christ-follower who was willing for ministry through accountability and oversight. To end session three, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions and comments for the evening were made, and we were dismissed.

Session four was entitled "Theological Foundation – Perichoresis: The Trinity as Team." Prayer for each other and glory sightings began our time together. Christian comedian Michael Jr. humorously taught us about getting to the "why" of our lives by video. A hearty conversation followed about the video and discussion questions on the nature and work of the Trinity. Finally, a lesson, "God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity," was taught by me on the theological concept of perichoresis or the "circle dance" of the Trinity. The theological premise we considered was that if God mysteriously lives in community with Godself, then might God's people learn about the nature of community (or teams) from the nature of God? Both scripture and theological thinkers were harnessed to build this argument. The discussion was remarkably lively especially given that none of the participants were "theologically trained." To end session four, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions and comments for the evening were made and, we were dismissed.

Session five was entitled "Interdisciplinary Foundation - Building Teams to Solve Adaptive Challenges." Our routine of prayer concerns, prayer, and glory sightings continued. The leadership video we viewed was entitled "Team Hoyt," an inspiring video about a father who learned to compete in marathons and triathlons while pushing his severally physically and mentally challenged son in a wheelchair. A more vigorous dialogue ensued. Our group discussion revolved around the best team and best leader

they had been on and why that team and leader were so exceptional. The adaptive leadership theory championed by Harvard Business School professors Ronald Heifetz and Martin Linsky was examined in the lesson. Adaptive leadership was defined and the fundamental principles of the theory were considered. The supplementary work of Patrick Lencioni and his "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" were also studied. To end session five, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions, and comments for the evening were made and we were dismissed.

The sixth and final session was entitled "Synergy – Being and Becoming a Generative Team Leader." The rich experience of beginning with prayer and glory sightings set the stage for a meaningful final time together. A longer video was used in this final session entitled "Keys to Praying for a Move of God" by Pastor Jon Tyson, Lead Pastor of Church of the City in New York City. He challenged us to be women and men who want more of God for ourselves, our families, our churches, and our regions. The room was electric with a response from everyone. The lesson focused on the personal responsibility the generative team leader has to "be the system" him or herself through finetuning the skill of accurate self-understanding and awareness. The work of Tod Bolsinger's "Tempered Resilience" walked us through the six stages of becoming a tempered leader. A rich conversation about the inner life of a leader and the guides needed at every season of a leader's life were examined, followed by four practical tools for building healthy teams: great, consistent meetings, mutual covenants, regular accountability, and fun together.Finally, a challenge from Jesus in Matthew 9:35-38 was considered. Here Jesus invites us to pray to the Lord of the harvest, not for harvest but for harvest workers. God is looking for teams of men and women to join him in his

Kingdom-expanding mission. For this final session, the journal reflection questions were reviewed, questions and comments for the evening were made, and we were dismissed with extreme gratitude from me for their participation.

Summary of Learning

The materials gathered from the three data points (Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires, Focused Journaling Exercise, and In-depth Individual Focused Interviews) were reviewed by me and my Contextual Associates (the Grace Church Operational team) on Monday, September 26, 2022. All four of us carefully reviewed the six sets of Pre-Seminar Questionnaires and Post-Seminar Questionnaires, and my notes from the In-depth Individual Focused Interview. In addition, one of my colleagues took notes on the meeting of our discussions and findings for my record.

Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires

Question one asked, “How would you define a heroic solo leader?” Question two asked, “How would you define a generative and adaptive team?” With these two questions, I wanted to measure the participant's understandings of and attitudes toward the types of leaders that we would be considered during the seminar. The consistent response from all six participants was that the heroic solo leader “tries to do it all themselves” and “believes they must carry the load and if they do not, it will crash and burn.” This kind of response only grew more substantial in the post-seminar questionnaire.

Question three was, “What are the major roadblocks to building generative teams?” This question sought to mine for the participant’s understanding of the barriers

to healthy, productive teams. The responses varied from "blaming" the leader for being "egotistical," close-minded," and "lacking in humility" to teams being stuck in tradition, having limited trust and fear of change. In the post-seminar questionnaire, participant 4 captured the group's spirit when she wrote, "You have an hierarchy where one person is in charge. It is the way a lot of corporations and churches are formed. It doesn't allow for diversity."

Question 4 asked the participants to rank order from most (1) to least (5) the important characteristics of a leader: bold visionary, effective communicator, team builder, community activist, and compassionate presence. It was my hope to see "team builder" move up the scale, thereby indicating a shift in thinking around the value of a leader as a "team builder." The table below indicates the shifts in the prioritizing from pre-seminar to post-seminar and the numerical difference:

Participant	Pre-Seminar	Post-Seminar	Difference
1	4	2	+2
2	4	1	+3
3	3	3	0
4	2	1	+1
5	1	1	0
6	2	1	+1

Table 1. *Pre and Post-Seminar Rankings of Question Four.*

The data indicates that for every participant except participant three, the value or priority of a leader excelling in team building capacity increased. There was a change in thinking.

Question five asked each participant to "Explain your ordering the characteristics of an effective leader." Participant two, who made the most significant numerical change (+3), beautifully yet simply articulated his shift in thinking by writing, "An effective leader needs an effective team…" In the pre-seminar questionnaire, he indicated that four of the five characteristics "…are critical, but the order may not be critically important." That is quite a shift in cognition.

Question six was based on Patrick Lencioni's work on the "five dysfunctions of a team." I desired to see if the participants would rank "They trust one another," which is the first and essential component of building a healthy team as primary. The table below indicates the shifts in the prioritizing from pre-seminar to post-seminar and the numerical difference:

Participant	Pre-Seminar	Post-Seminar	Difference
1	1	1	0
2	1	1	0
3	1	1	0
4	3	1	+2
5	1	1	0
6	1	1	0

Table 2. *Pre and Post-Seminar Rankings of Question Six.*

Five of the six participants before and after the seminar embraced trust as the highest of five characteristics of a strong and sustainable team. Participant four shifted her ranking

of trust from three to one. This is a strong indication of an intellectual shift in the importance of trust building for teams.

Question six asked the participants to "Explain your ordering the characteristics of a vital and sustainable ministry." Several of the participants wrote that "Trust is the key." Each participant, pre-seminar and post-seminar, prioritized trust over healthy conflict, commitment to decisions, accountability, and achievement of results.

In-Depth Individual Focused Interview

Following our six weeks of seminar classes held on six consecutive Sundays from August 7 to September 11, 2022, I scheduled individual in-person or Zoom meetings with the six participants. Five interviews were done via Zoom, and one was held in person. Each participant was asked the same questions and, then was asked to share learnings and insights from their weekly focused journaling exercise.

The first question I asked each participant was: "What barriers exist in you to being a generative team leader who builds generative team? What do you need to "unlearn" so that you can resist heroic solo leadership and embrace and cultivate being a generative team leader who builds generative teams?" This question elicited very personal and genuine responses like "I do not see myself as a leader," "Years of working for companies that had heroic solo leaders and since that is what I knew and understood, it is what I did," "Selfishness," "Giving up control, "Unlearning what I learned from my father in business," and "Fear of rejection." I was surprised at the honesty and trust given to me in such a short time. They named many of the barriers to being a generative team leader.

I asked each participant the second question: “Prior to the seminar modules, what were your general impressions/experience with generative team leadership?” This question revealed the wide variety of team experiences all six participants had faced in the church and the marketplace. One participant acknowledged their complete lack of understanding and familiarity of generative teams with the statement, “I had very little idea and experience with generative teams in business because I grew up with a hierarchical leadership concept.” While another participant said, “I have been on generative teams. We just didn’t know we were generative teams, but we were!” My observation is that participants that were on Grace Church teams who practice these principles were the ones who indicated they had a good experience being on a generative team.

The third question I asked each participant was: “How did the seminar modules impact your thoughts about the journey from heroic solo leadership to generative team leadership?” The participants responses varied on this question. Some shared about a particular video or teaching segment that impacted them. While others focused on the long process that building a generative team requires. One participant compared it to his recovery from drug addiction when he said, “This mirrors my recovery journey. Before recovery, I was a heroic solo leader, and it almost killed me.” Still, other participants personalized their learning with comments like “I have a long way to go,” “This is a better way for me,” and “I didn’t know I was on a generative team. Now I have language.” The bottom line is that each participant grew in their cognitive understanding and personal commitment to grow as a generative leader.

The fourth question I asked each participant was: “What tensions come to mind about this journey?” Where question one was about the personal barriers, question four was about the team barriers in the journey from heroic solo leadership to generative team leadership. Overall, each participant identified the reality of how arduous this transformational journey is. The participants consistently named the amount of time it takes to build trust coupled with the resistance to change. One even used the old church adage, “Jorge, you know the seven deadly last words of the Church. But we’ve always done it that way!” The risk and high cost of this journey were named by each participant.

The fifth question I asked each participant was: “What further resourcing would be helpful to you as a leader on this journey?” The responses ranged in sharing other resources they had used that were helpful to them, including Alcoholics Anonymous literature. One participant shared a desire for more information about issues like the self-care of the leader. Two participants said they needed more clarity around the definition of generative teams and examples of what being a generative leader and generative team look like.

The sixth question was: “Anything else you would like to share about the seminar experience?” The participants described two themes: gratitude for the experience and a desire for the learning journey to continue. As a pastor, the two most satisfying responses were: “This really helped me with my life. I’m getting an spiritual director,” and “I am starting to let others lead and make decisions with me.” She then went on to explain how she had led in the past as a heroic solo leader, but because of the seminar, she was beginning to invest in helping others on her team use their gifts to make the ministry

stronger and more vital. This was evidence of not just cognitive and attitudinal change but behavior change as well.

Focused Journaling Exercise

The last thing I asked each participant in our one-on-one post-seminar interview was to share any insights they gleaned from the focused journal exercise. A common theme I noted is that most participants found the journaling to be a self-reflection and application experience. One participant honestly said, "It made me ask the question, what qualifies me to be a leader?" Another participant described a "Holy Spirit moment" where he heard God invited him to "follow to lead." Still, another participant told me that the journal exercise "…added fuel to the fire making sure I'm walking the talk." Finally, one participant described how the journal exercise "stirred my spirit" and was filled with "revelations and ah-ha moments." Of the three data points, I found this one the least helpful in validating my project, while, at the same time pastorally, I found it to be very affirming of the project and my work.

Conclusion

The goal of my project was to alter the thinking, shift the motivation and change the behavior of the six participants in the "Building a Generative Team" seminar to identify and "unlearn" heroic solo leadership and begin the journey to becoming generative team leaders. This has been done to differing degrees in each of the six participants. The data indicates that I changed the thinking and motivation of the participants. The evidence gathered from the three data points suggests I did "move the dial" on rejecting heroic solo leadership and embracing generative team leadership. In

general, I did a much better job addressing the "why" than helping them with the "how" of this leadership transformation.

Each of the six participants was deeply engaged in ministries of Grace Church. All but one serve on an operational team who are charged in part with leading through the adaptive challenges of a ministry area. These teams are led by staff who have been coached in cultivating generative teams. It was a gift to "see the lightbulb come on" for these leaders as they connected the dots between what they were experiencing on their operational teams and their learnings in the seminar. Only time will tell whether this learning will translate into a change in their behavior in the church and marketplace leadership. Or, as one of my colleagues from the Grace Church Operational put it in reviewing the data, "They tasted it but don't know what the recipe is."

In particular, more intentional work needs to be done on coaching these leaders to discover, develop and deploy their replacements on their teams. This strategy has been profoundly intuitive in our Grace Church culture, but it needs to be significantly more strategic, intentional, and accountable.

Question four of the "Pre- and Post-Seminar Questionnaires" clearly indicated a shift in cognition by five out of the six participants affirming "team building" as the most essential characteristic of the five leadership traits. The sixth participant in both the pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaires ranked "team builder as number one. The average ranking movement of "team builder" was 1.16 per participant. Again, this was a quantitative verification.

The other questions and instruments were significantly more qualitative. Identifying the barriers that keep leaders from shifting from heroic solo leadership to

generative team leadership is important to my project. Repeatedly, the issue of ego and pride was identified in most of the data points as that which keeps people from continuing in this leadership journey. Two dynamics seemed to be at play in their responses: either insecurity ("I'm not capable") or unwillingness ("I don't want to give up control"). In my estimation, both hesitations are profoundly informed by a lack of emotional health as well as a secured spiritual identity as a beloved child of God.

With this in mind, more work needs to be done on the place of spiritual formation and emotional health as it relates to the journey from heroic solo leader to geberative team leader. There seems to be a revival of sorts happening in the American church to reclaim the ancient spiritual formation practices through the ministries and writings of Practicing the Way and John Mark Comer[1] as well as Emotionally Healthy Spirituality and Pete Scazzero.[2] These contemporary writers and movements are point the church back to the importance of the inner world for spiritual leadership.

My spiritual pilgrimage began and was rooted at my home church, Pine Castle United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida, in the late 1970's. One of our spiritual practices was the "opening of the altar" after the message for private prayer, group prayer, or anointing with oil for healing. I still can hear Pastor Yates say, "Leave it here at the altar." More than forty years later, I have vivid memories of kneeling at the altar rail and crying out to God through tears. That "space" became a meeting place with God for me and a place of surrender to God's will and purposes for my life. More times than I can count, I told God, "I'm yours! Take my life! Use me!" This sentiment is still true four

[1] www.practicingtheway.org

[2] www.emotionallyhealthy.org

decades later, especially regarding this project. Near the end of my pastoral ministry, I surrender my life and this work to the glory and honor of the One who saved and continues to sanctify me. To my good and great God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I pray, “It’s yours Lord! Take it and use it as you see fit!” I lay it on the altar.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT EMAIL TEMPLATE

Recruitment Email Template

Dear "Name":

You have been identified by your Campus Pastor as growing leader at Grace Church. This excited me very much and I want to ask you to prayerfully consider joining me for a six week seminar called "Building Generative Teams." For the past 2 years, I have been working on a doctoral project at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. My focus has been on a congregations journey from a style of leadership that I call "heroic solo leadership" to a collaborative style of leadership that I call "generative team leadership." Frankly, it's the journey that I have been on for almost 16 years now. I have learned so much in the past 2 years. With this in mind, this seminar serves as the research project phase of my project and I'd like for you to join and help me. We'll learn together from biblical, historical, theological and interdisciplinary arenas about building generative teams. We will meet on six consecutive Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm in Room 3 at the Cape Coral campus. I'd like to schedule a short face-to-face meeting to see if you have any questions or concerns. If you are open to this, let me know my replying to this email and we can schedule our appointment at a time that works for both of us.

With gratitude,
Jorge Acevedo Lead Pastor

APPENDIX B

SEMINAR WORKBOOK

BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

Building Generative Teams Seminar

Thank you for joining me on this six-week learning adventure. I am tremendously grateful to God for the privilege of making this journey with you. My prayer is that as a result of our time together you will grow in your relationship with God and become more of the leader that God has "wired" you to be.

I love being one of your pastors,

Jorge Acevedo

Schedule

- August 7 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #1.
- August 14 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #2.
- August 21 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #3.
- August 29 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #4
- September 4 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #5
- September 11 (6:30-8:00pm) – Seminar #6

Location

- Grace Church, Cape Coral campus
- Room 3

Themes

- Week 1: An Introduction to Leadership in the Church
- Week 2: Biblical Foundation – Moses and the Consequences of a Burned-Out Leader
- Week 3: Historical Foundation – John Wesley and the People Called Methodists
- Week 4: Theological Foundation – Perichoresis: The Trinity as Team
- Week 5: Interdisciplinary Foundation – Building Teams to Solve Adaptive Challenges
- Week 6: Synergy – Being and Becoming a Generative Team Leader

Week 1:
An Introduction to Leadership in the Church

"The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who humble themselves to serve."
John Stott, Issues Facing Christians Today

Video

1. Watch "The Art of Possibility" by Benjamin Zander.

2. What does this video teach us about leadership?

Group Discussion

1. When you hear the word "leader," what words or phrases come to your mind? Why?

2. How would you define the word "leader?"

God as Leader

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1 (NLT)

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
Genesis 1:26-27 (NLT)

Jesus as Leader

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him.
Matthew 4:18-20 (NLT)

So Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:42-45 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit as Leader

"But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you…When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me."
John 14: 7, 13-14 (NLT)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8 (NLT)

Men and Women as Leaders

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.
1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.
1 Corinthians 12:12 (NLT)

If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously.
Romans 12:8b (NLT)

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on these questions:

-
    a. Who or what have been the influences on my understanding of being a leader?
    b. What kind of leader am I?
    c. How would I define “team?”

Week 2:
Biblical Foundation -
Moses and the Consequences of a Burned-Out Leader

"That's all I can stands. I can't stands no more."
Popeye

*"Jorge, how in the *#@! have you done this for so long?"*
Wes Olds

Video

1. Watch "The Living Bridges of Meghalaya."

2. What does this video teach us about leadership?

Group Discussion

1. Who are some of the "great leaders" of the Bible? Why are they considered "great leaders?"

2. Are leaders "born" or "made?" Why?

A Biblical Case Study of a Worn Out Leader

Moses' Problem:

The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening.
Exodus 18:13 (NLT)

Moses' Problem Revealed:

When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"
Exodus 18:14 (NLT)

Moses' Rationalization:

Moses replied, "Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God's decrees and give them his instructions."
Exodus 18:15-16 (NLT)

Jethro's Intervention:

"This is not good!" Moses' father-in-law exclaimed. "You're going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself."
Exodus 18:17-18 (NLT)

Jethro's Counsel:

"Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him. Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you. If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."
Exodus 18:19-23 (NLT)

Moses' Obedience:

Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.
Exodus 18:24-26 (NLT)

Moses and Jethro Depart:

Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land. Exodus 18:27 (NLT)

Six leadership insights

1. God needs and makes use of leaders.

2. Leaders have a "default" towards heroic solo leadership.

3. Leaders have limits.

4. Leaders need catalyzing defining moments to grow.

5. Shared leadership gives "tov" (goodness) to both leaders and the organizations they lead.

6. Leaders get to choose regularly whether they will be humble and teachable.

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on these questions:

    a. How do I identify with Moses, the burned-out leader of Exodus 18:13, 15-16?
    b. Who has been a wise Jethro of Exodus 18:17-18 in my life?
    c. How would you characterize your Jethro?

Week 3:
Historical Foundation -
John Wesley and the People Called Methodists

"Give me one hundred men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not whether they be clergyman or laymen, they alone will shake the gates of Hell and set up the kingdom of Heaven upon the earth."
John Wesley

Video

1. Watch "How Wolves Change Rivers."

2. What does this video teach us about leadership?

Group Discussion

1. Who are some of the "great leaders" of history? Why are they considered "great leaders?"

2. How are great teams formed?

Formation in Epworth and Oxford

"If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve the assembly…Send me your positive command, in such full and expressed terms as to absolve me from our guilt and punishment for neglecting the opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Suzanna Wesley in a letter to Samuel Wesley

Four life shaping events

1. Failure in Georgia

January 24, 1738 - I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me … I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled … Oh, who will deliver me from this fear of death?
The Journal of John Wesley

2. Heart Warmed at Aldersgate

May 24, 1738 - …I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.
The Journal of John Wesley

3. Pentecostal Fire at Fedder Lane

Monday Jan. 1, 1739 - About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground.
The Journal of John Wesley

4. Field Preaching in Bristol

Saturday, March 31, 1739 - In the evening I reached Bristol and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; I had been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.
The Journal of John Wesley

Monday, April 2, 1739 - At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile…
The Journal of John Wesley

Organizing and Managing a Movement of God

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

"For each wave of grace, there was a corresponding formative element to connect people to that grace...this conscious alignment is one of Wesley's finest legacies to the Christian tradition."
Steve Harper, The Way to Heaven

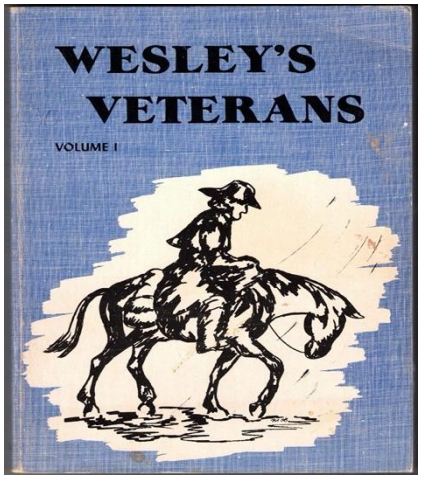
Great Commission	Wave of Grace	Methodists
Go	Prevenient Grace	United Society
Make	Justifying Grace	Class Meeting
Teach & Obey	Sanctifying Grace	Band

Though Wesley's strategy for managing the leadership necessary to lead the exploding revival was fluid (meaning he made changes regularly), he had a desire to create systems that assured that Societies and their leaders were staying faithful to the mission. This gathering of leaders of the movement in 1739 became the precursor for a "conference" system where Mr. Wesley would examine and train preachers and regularly check on the condition of the Societies. Walk alongside supervision and mutual accountability was necessary for the vitality of the movement as it grew. Mr. Wesley knew that just as disciples were grown in community, so were leaders.

Jorge Acevedo, United Theological Seminary, Unpublished Dissertation

Who were these Methodist Leaders?

From the beginning of the Wesleyan movement, many people functioned as leaders. People from different social locations helped lead this passionate movement of God. There was no one route to leadership in the Wesleyan ranks. Leadership came from the Church of England priests and also from a stonemason, a printer and publisher, a baker, a cobbler and a schoolmaster. Leaders were male and female, ordained and lay, of noble birth and modest origin, black and white.
Lovett Weems, Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit



Wesley could never have fulfilled his mission without the band of preachers whom providence provided for him against his will. He soon found that the Spirit of God which had strangely warmed his own heart and touched his own lips had bestowed the same grace on these homely men of the people. They became his best friends and his noblest colleagues.
John Telford, Editor, Wesley's Veteran's

Leaders Need Accountability and Oversight

Oh begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way: else you will be a trifler all your days…Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross, and be a Christian altogether. Then will all the children of God rejoice (not grieve) over you.
The Letters of John Wesley

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on this question:

    a. How does what I learned about "John Wesley and the People Called Methodists" and the way they grew maturing disciples impact my life and leadership?

Week 4:
Theological Foundation -
Perichoresis: The Trinity as Team

"...I am in the Father and the Father is in me."
John 14:11 (NLT)

Video

1. Watch "Knowing Your Why" by Michael Jr.

2. What does this video teach us about leadership?

Group Discussion

1. How would you explain the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) to someone?

2. How does each Person of the Trinity inform our understanding and practice of leadership?

🎶 God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity 🎶

The term perichoresis indicates the mode of existence of the persons of the Holy Trinity characterized by interpenetration, co-inhabitation, mutual fellowship, surrounding, or indwelling. In Greek, "perichoreo" means to "make room," to "go or revolve around."
The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, by virtue of their eternal love, live in, dwell in each other to such an extent that they are one.
Stephen Seamands, Ministry in the Image of God

The Trinity and Teams

Recent Trinitarian thinkers, especially those drawn towards social analogies to the Trinity, have laid considerable emphasis on the concept of perichoresis. In many cases there is a tendency for the underlying metaphors to shift from the spatial to the psychological and emotional, so that perichoresis is imagined as a peculiarly intense love, empathy, or interpersonal closeness.
Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis," Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology

The doctrine of the Trinity may yield models for building the human community—not on a hierarchy of beings but on the diversity of gifts that operate in an integrative manner.
Merci Amba Oduyoye, Quoted in Henning Wrogemann's Intercultural Theology

The whole blessed Trinity is shy. Each member of the Trinity points faithfully and selflessly to the other in a gracious circle.
Fredrick Dale Brunner and William Hordern, The Holy Spirit: Shy Member of the Trinity

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me."
John 15:4 (NLT)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
2 Corinthians 13:14 (NLT)

This so-called 'early Christian communism' was not a social programme. It was the expressior of the new trinitarian experience of community. People put their community above the individual in their private possessions. They no longer needed these possessions to give their lives security. In the spirit of the resurrection their fear of death disappeared, and with it their greed for life. That is why they had 'enough', 'more than enough.' In this community the competitive struggle which turns people into lonely individuals is ended, and the social chill of a heartless world vanishes.
Jurgen Moltmann, Experiences in Theology

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on these questions:

    a. How does the nature of the Trinity as Team influence my understanding of teams?

2. This week, download the video "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" by Patrick Lencioni and watch it. It's almost one hour long. https://www.dropbox.com/s/uq2otsgcc0rmwbg/5%20Dysfunctions%20of%20a%20Team.mp4?dl=0

Week 5:
Interdisciplinary Foundation -
Building Teams to Solve Adaptive Challenges

"As our colleague Jeff Lawrence poignantly says, 'There is no such thing as a dysfunctional organization. Because every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve the results it currently gets."
Jeff Lawrence quoted in Ron Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky, The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

"Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."
Jaroslav Pelikan, The Vindication of Tradition

Video

1. Watch "Together Team Hoyt."

2. What does this video teach us about teams?

Group Discussion

1. What was the best team you've ever been on? Why was it so good?

2. Who has been the best team leader you've ever had? Why were they so good?

Adaptive Leadership Defined

Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. The concept of thriving is drawn from evolutionary biology, in which a successful adaptation has three characteristics: (1) it preserves the DNA essential for the species' continued survival; (2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species current needs; and (3) it creates DNA arrangements to give the species' the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments. Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future.
Ronald A Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*

Adaptive leadership is not finding a new inspiring vision but reframing an original or enduring vision of the organization that allows everyone to see a new, compelling future for their beloved organization that is worth sacrifice and commitment.
Tod Bolsinger, Tempered Resilience

Fundamentals of Adaptive Leadership

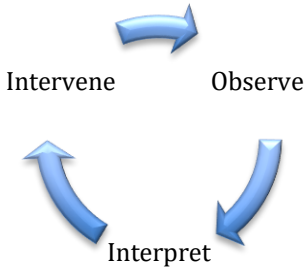
1. Distinguishing Between Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

Technical problems (even though they may be complex) can be solved with knowledge and procedures already in hand. In contrast, adaptive challenges require new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior. In this view, leadership is the activity of mobilizing people to address adaptive challenges—those challenges that cannot be resolved by expert knowledge and routine management alone. Adaptive challenges often appear as swamp issues— tangled, complex problems composed of multiple systems that resist technical analysis and thus stand in contrast to the high, hard ground issues that are easier to address but where less is at stake for the organization or the society. They ask for more than changes in routine or mere performance. They call for changes of heart and mind—the transformation of long-standing habits and deeply held assumptions and values.
Sharon Dalos Parks, Leadership Can Be Taught

2. Get on the Balcony

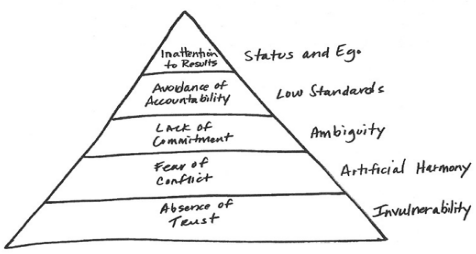
The single most important skill and most undervalued capacity for exercising adaptive leadership is diagnosis.
Ronald A Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

3. The Process of Adaptive Leadership



- Observe: accurate, unbridled, freed from personal agenda
- Interpret: slow; not quick to conclusions; multiple hypotheses
- Intervene: test theories and make decisions

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team



Imagine a team where:

1. They trust one another.
2. They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
3. They commit to decisions and plans of action.
4. They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
5. They focus on achievement of collective results.

Great teams run on 'psychological safety' that is built through empathy, good listening, and communication…
Tod Bolsinger, Tempered Resilience

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on these questions:

    a. How does the idea of generative teams that address adaptive challenges encourage and challenge you?
    b. Why?

Week 6:
Synergy -
Being and Becoming a Generative Team Leader

"The single greatest advantage any company can achieve is organizational health."
Patrick Lencioni, The Advantage

Video

1. Watch "Keys to Praying for a Move of God" by Jon Tyson.

2. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

Group Discussion

1. What has been most helpful to you as a leader that you have learned in this seminar?

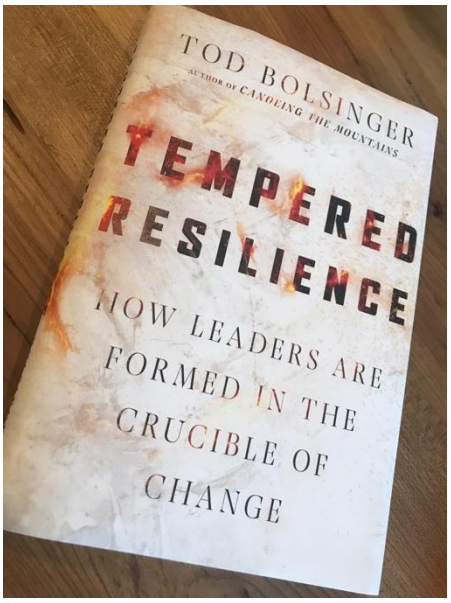
2. How will what you have learned change your leadership behavior?

Be the System

"People who lead adaptive change most successfully have a diagnostic mindset about themselves as well as about the situation. That is, they are continually striving to understand what is going on inside, how they are changing over time and how they as a system interact with their organization as a system."
Ronald A Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

Five practices to better and more accurately understand your personal system:
1. Identify your loyalties.
2. Know your tuning.
3. Broaden your bandwidth.
4. Understand your roles.
5. Articulate your purposes.

Be a Tempered Leader



"Leadership therefore is always about the transformation and growth of a people – starting with the leader – to develop the resilience and adaptive capacity to wisely cut through resistance and accomplish the mission of the group…So, to lead, especially in the face of resistance, requires that we develop resilience."
Tod Bolsinger, Tempered Resilience

Six stages of growth for becoming a tempered leader:
1. Working
2. Heating
3. Holding
4. Hammering
5. Hewing
6. Tempering

Inner Life Guides

Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.
2 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT)

Keep a close watch on how you live…
1 Timothy 4:16b (NLT)

"...to lead alone is reckless and arrogant; it is foolish and dangerous to both self and others. To lead alone usually results in either a failure of nerve or a failure of heart, which is to squander the valuable time, energy, and commitment of organizations and followers. And therefore, to lead people without partners and mentors, full support of family and friends, and a lifetime commitment at every moment that you are leading of being in either psychological therapy, coaching, spiritual direction, or mentoring would be considered leadership malpractice."
Tod Bolsinger, Tempered Resilience

Tools for building healthy teams
1. Great, consistent meetings
2. Mutual covenants
3. Regular accountability
4. Fun together

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."
Matthew 9:35-38 (NLT)

Homework

1. Reflect in your journal on these questions:

    a. What in you keeps you from being and becoming a generative team leader?
    b. How are you encouraged in your journey to being and becoming a generative team leader?
    c. Why or why not?

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSCENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

Investigator Name:
Jorge Acevedo

Contact Information:
13 Southeast 21st Place, Cape Coral, FL 33990;
239-574-7161 jacevedo@egracechurch.com

Introduction:
I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary.

Purpose:
I am conducting a study on congregational vitality and sustainability by resting heroic sole leadership and instead embracing generative team leadership.

Requirements for Participation:
You are invited because you have been identified as an emerging leader at Grace Church.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:

1. Participate in 6, 1.5 hour seminars at Grace Church, Cape Coral campus on 6 consecutive Sunday evenings.
2. Submit pre and post seminar questionnaires.
3. Complete a weekly focused journaling exercise.
4. Participate in a videotaped follow-up in-depth individual interview following the seminar.

Risks:
Potential risks include physical discomfort sitting for extended periods of time during the seminar.

Benefits:
As this project focuses on the local church and leaders within the local church, both can grow in the vitality and sustainability. It is my deepest hope that leaders-in-training will reject the cultural bias towards heroic solo leadership. It is not sustainable or good for the vitality of the ministries they lead. As the local church is more vital and sustainable and not relying on heroic solo leaders, communities experience the love of God in real and tangible ways. The whole Body of Christ is released into the church and world. As a result, the lost are found. The found are nurtured. The lonely are enveloped in community. The poor are fed. The marginalized are invited in. The addicted are delivered. Injustice is challenged and God's Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

Voluntariness:
Participation is voluntary and you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will have no

impact on your membership or participation in Grace Church. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please contact me directly in person, on the phone, or electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

Confidentiality:
We will be careful to keep your information confidential, and we will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted and password protected. You can decide whether you want your name used. The final in-depth individual interview will be videotaped. Every effort will be made to maintain your confidentiality.

Summary:
If you have any questions about the research study please contact me.

Signature:
Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

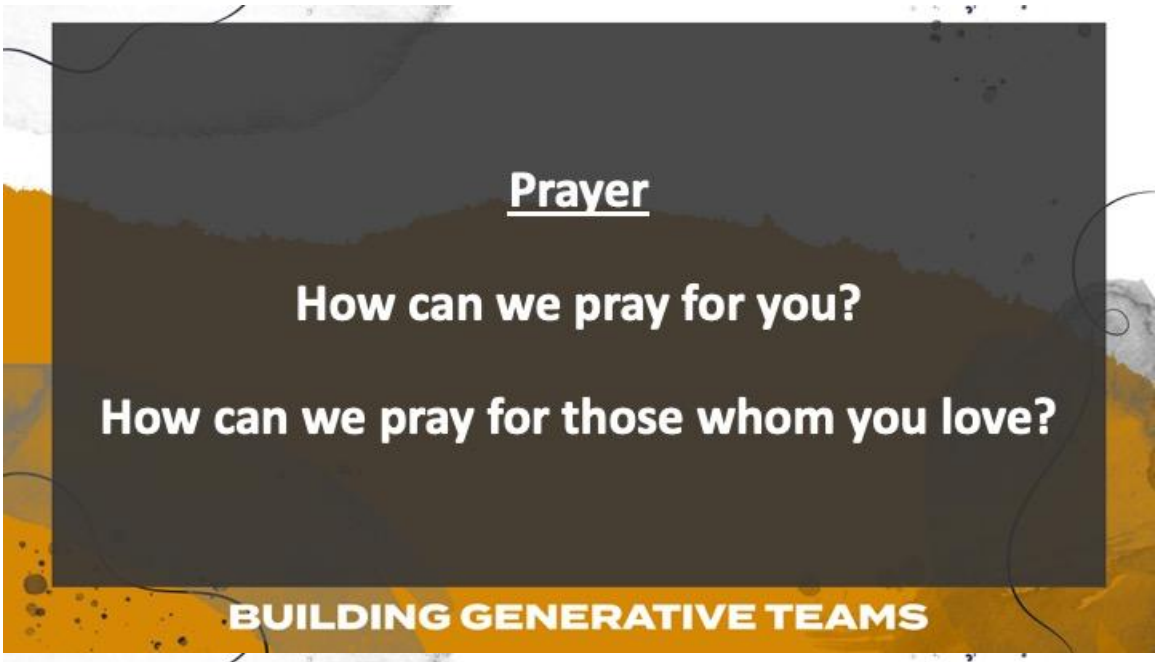
Signature of Person Agreeing to Participate in the
Project/Study _____
Date Signed _____

APPENDIX D

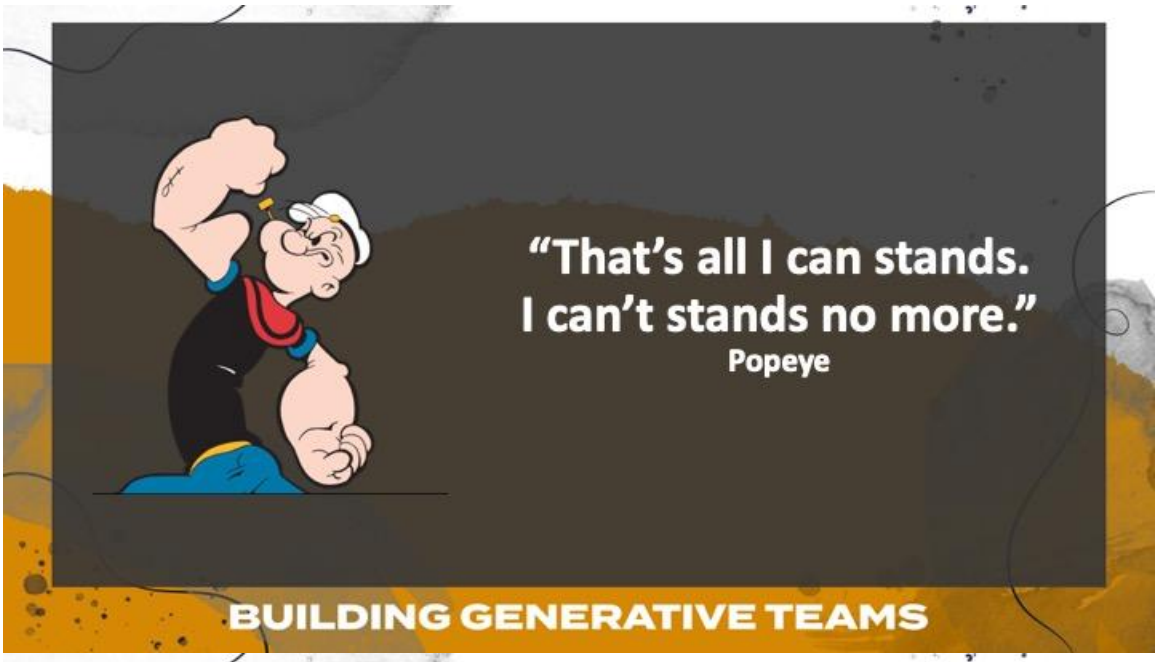
POWERPOINT SLIDES

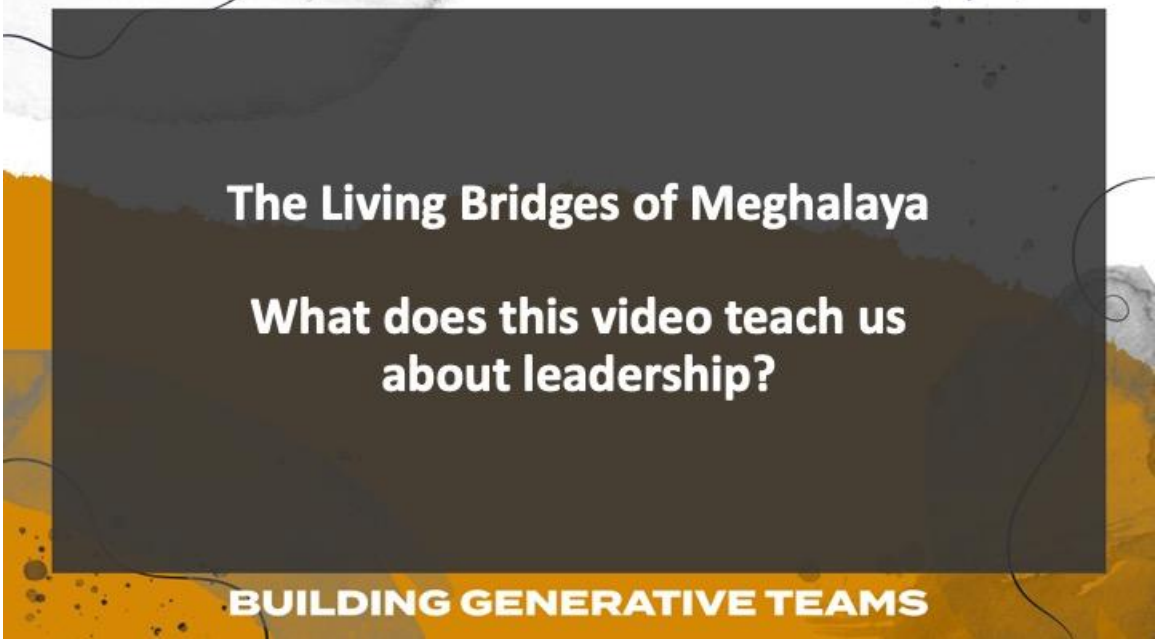
BUILDING
GENERATIVE
TEAMS

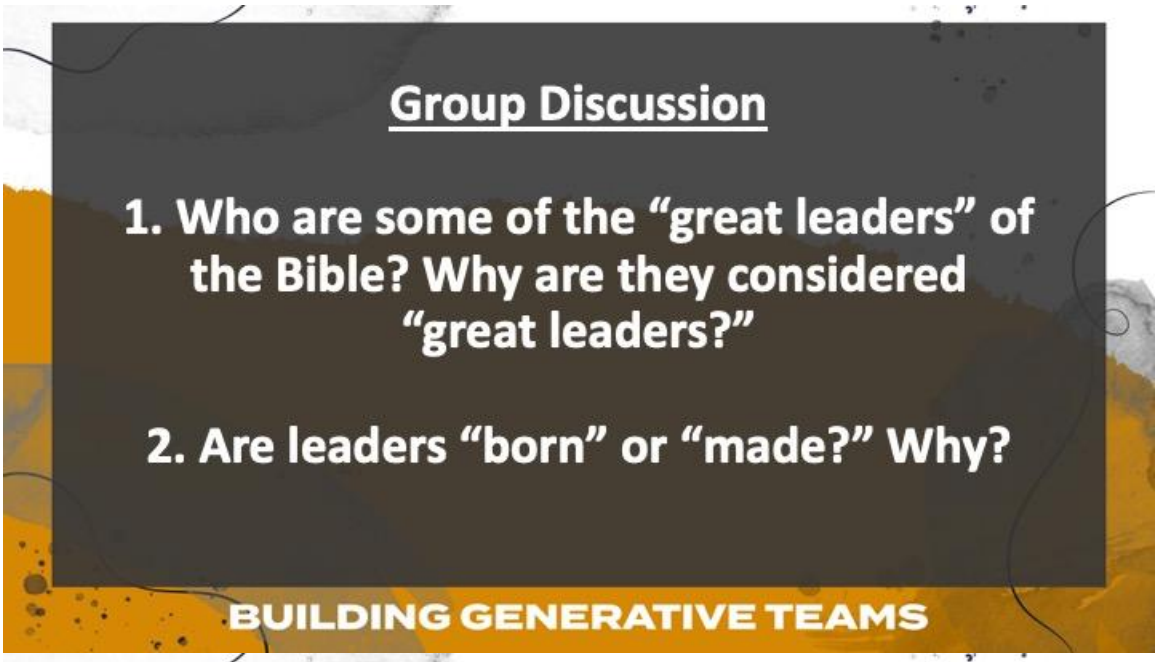
Week 2:
Biblical Foundation –
Moses and the Consequences of a
Burned-Out Leader
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

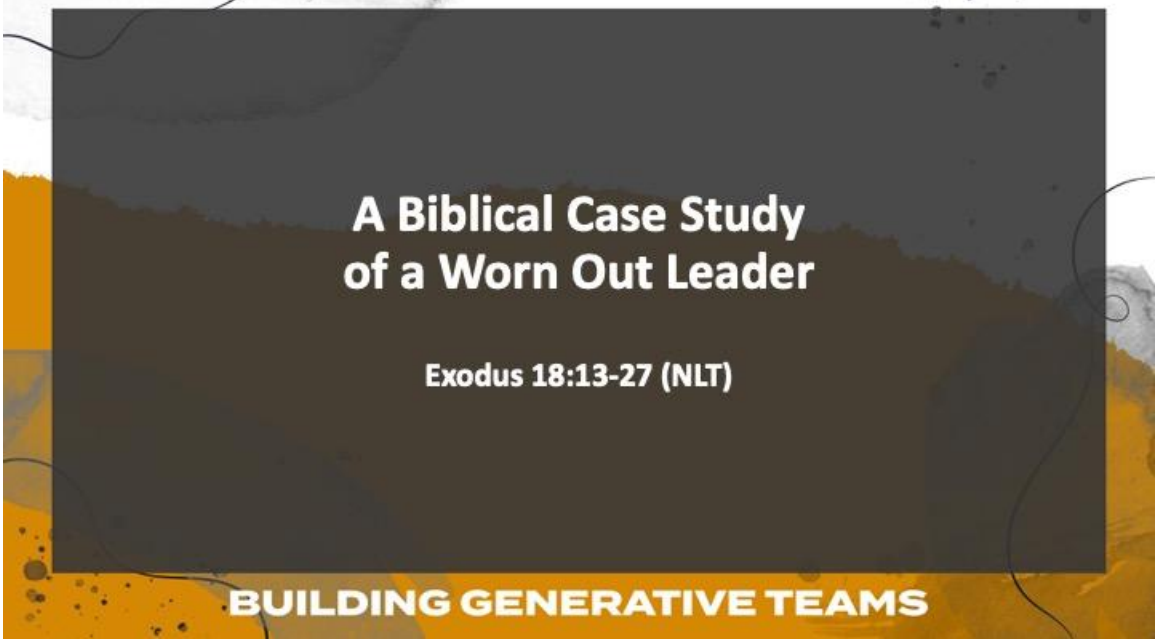

Prayer
How can we pray for you?
How can we pray for those whom you love?
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

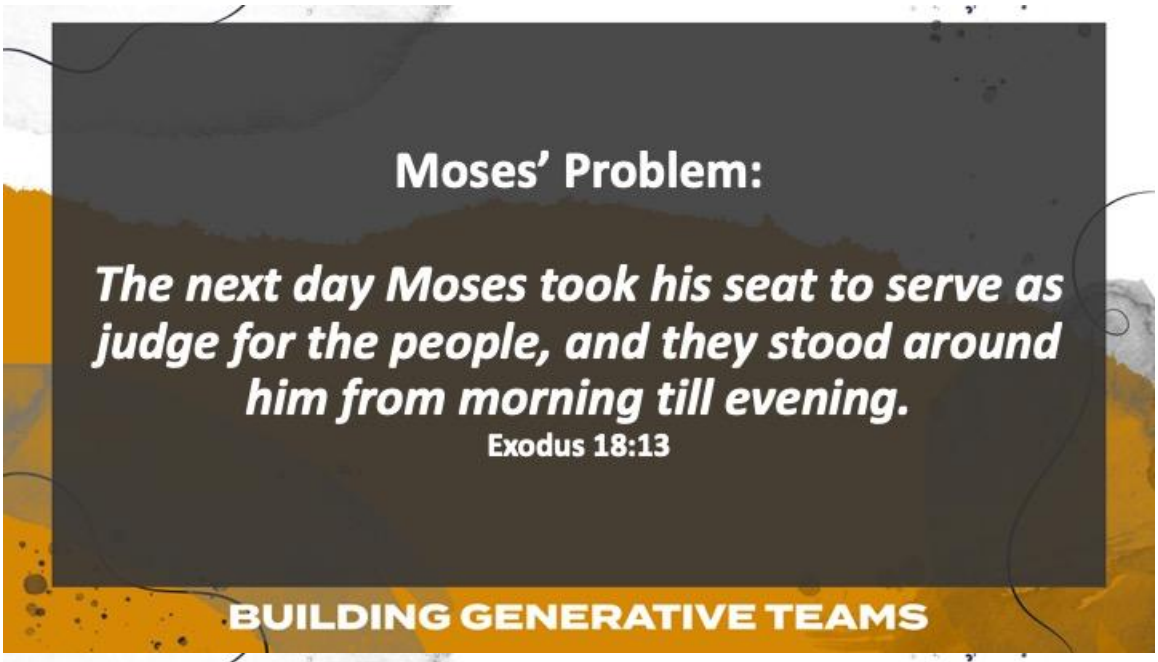
Glory sightings
Where have you seen God show up and show off this week?
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

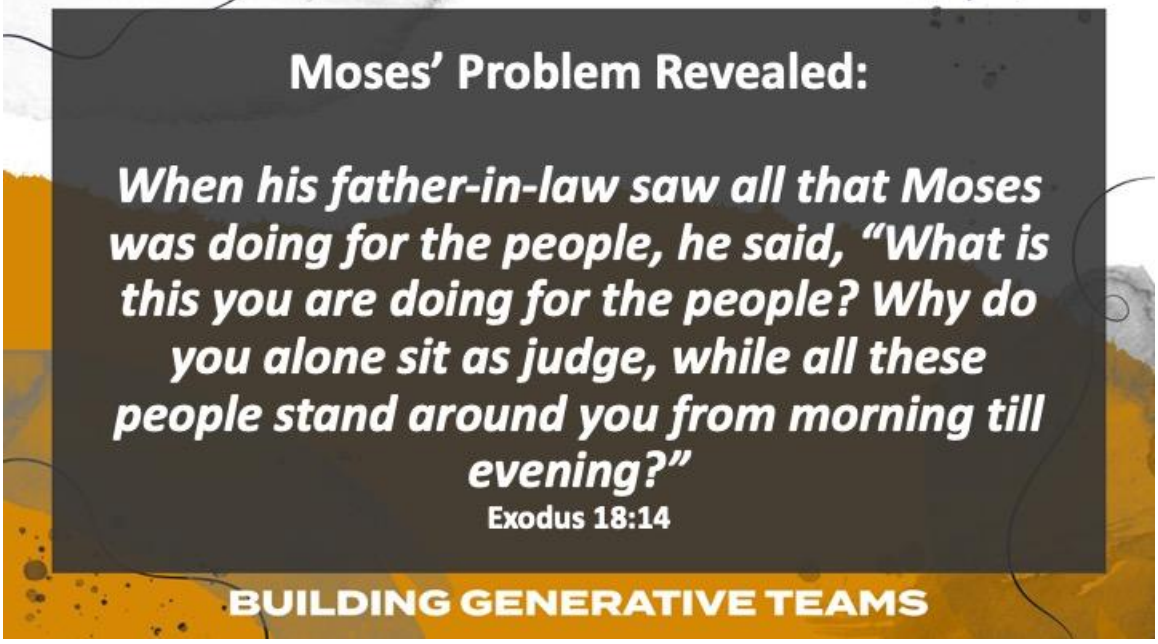

"That's all I can stands.
I can't stands no more."
Popeye
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

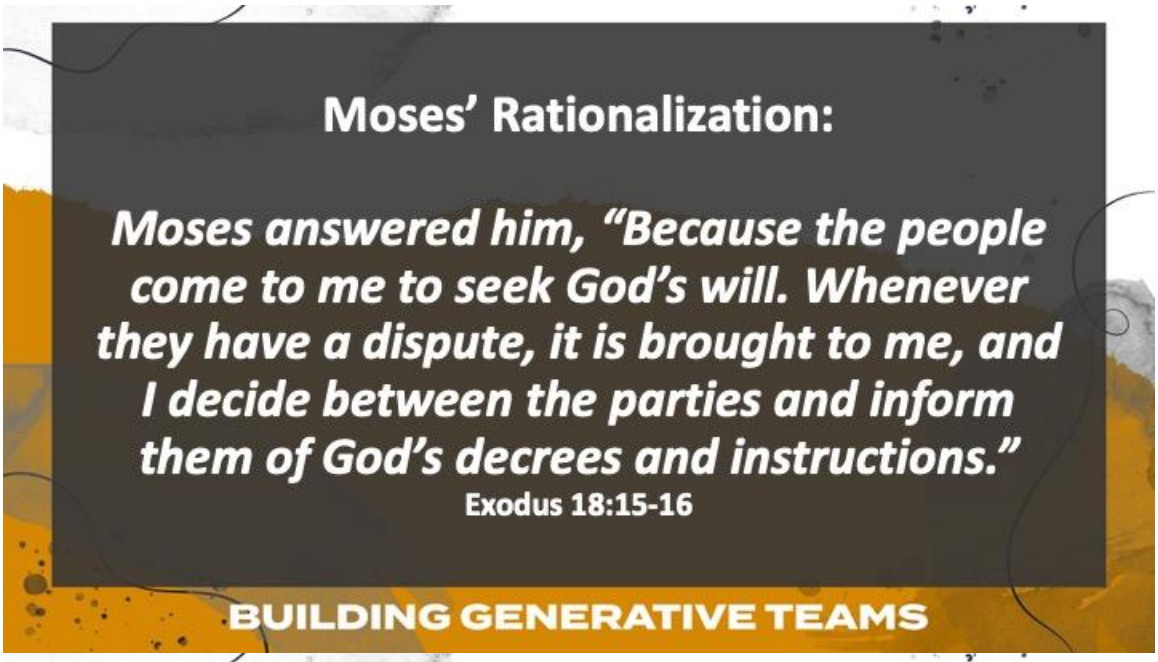

The Living Bridges of Meghalaya
What does this video teach us about leadership?
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

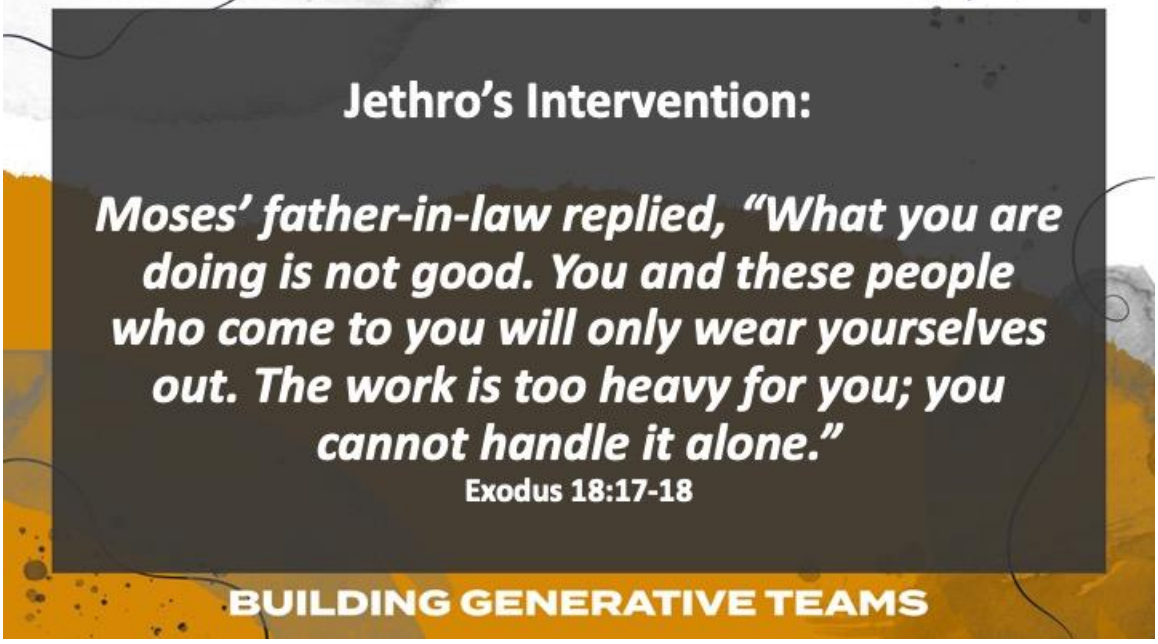

Group Discussion
1. Who are some of the "great leaders" of the Bible? Why are they considered "great leaders?"
2. Are leaders "born" or "made?" Why?
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

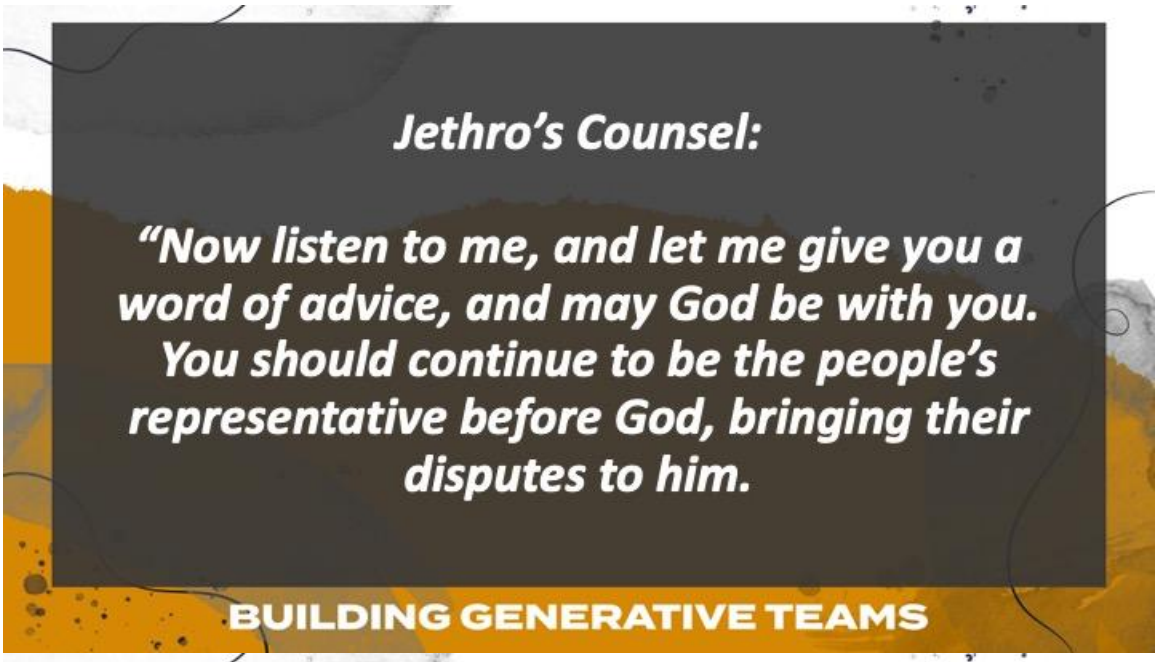

A Biblical Case Study of a Worn Out Leader
Exodus 18:13-27 (NLT)
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

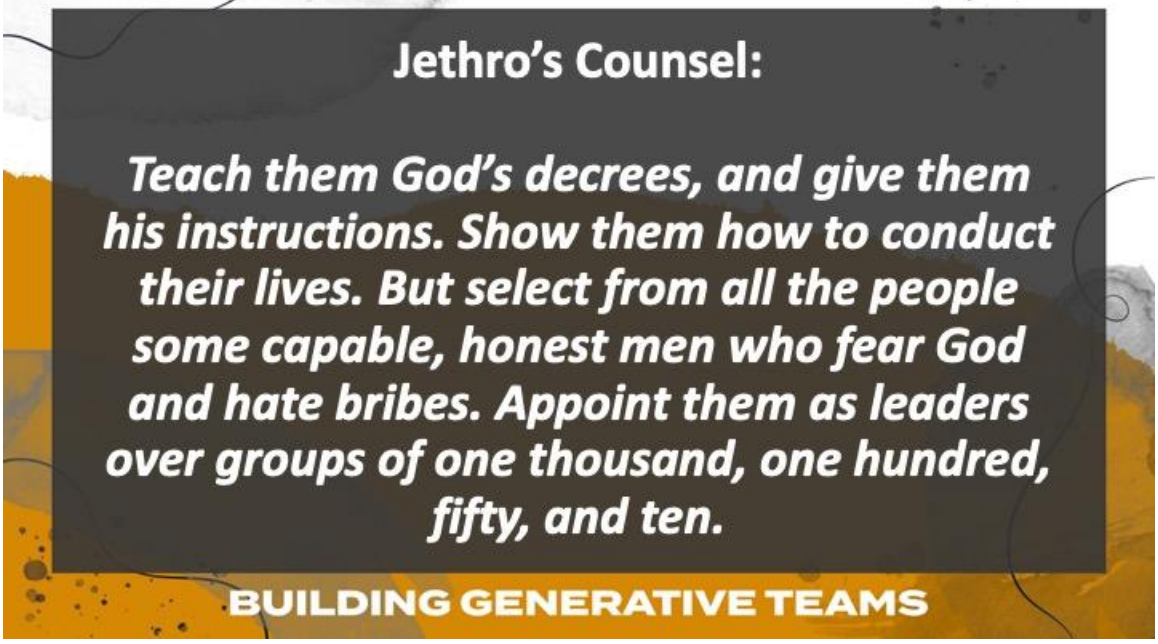

Moses' Problem:
The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening.
Exodus 18:13
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

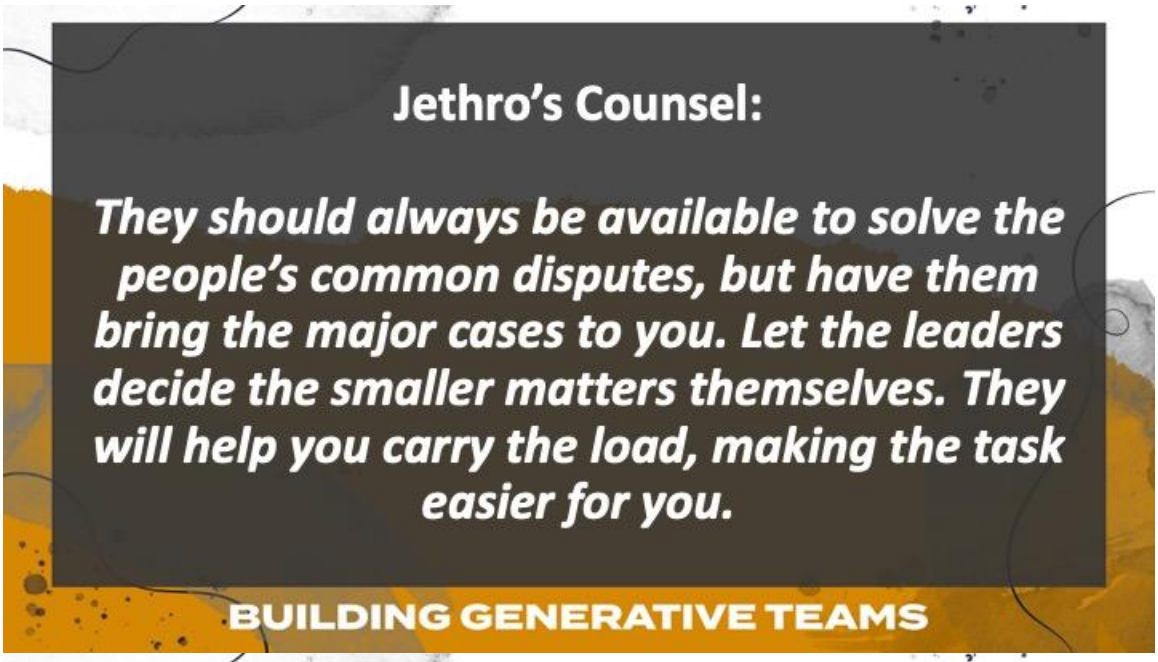

Moses' Problem Revealed:
When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"
Exodus 18:14
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

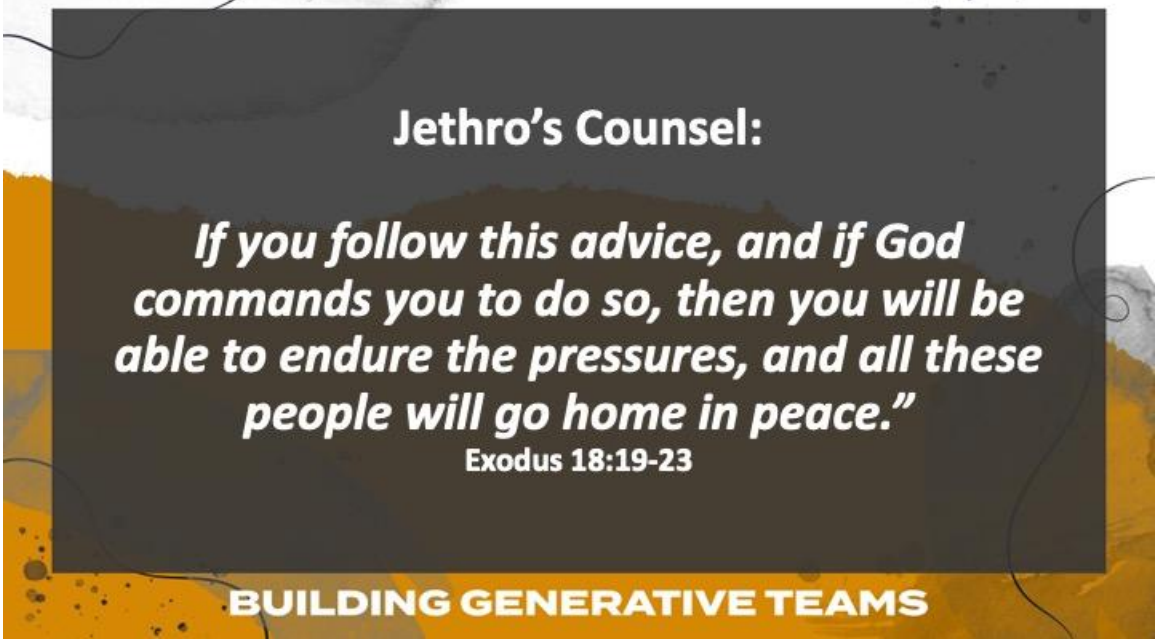

Moses' Rationalization:
Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."
Exodus 18:15-16
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Jethro's Intervention:
Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."
Exodus 18:17-18
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

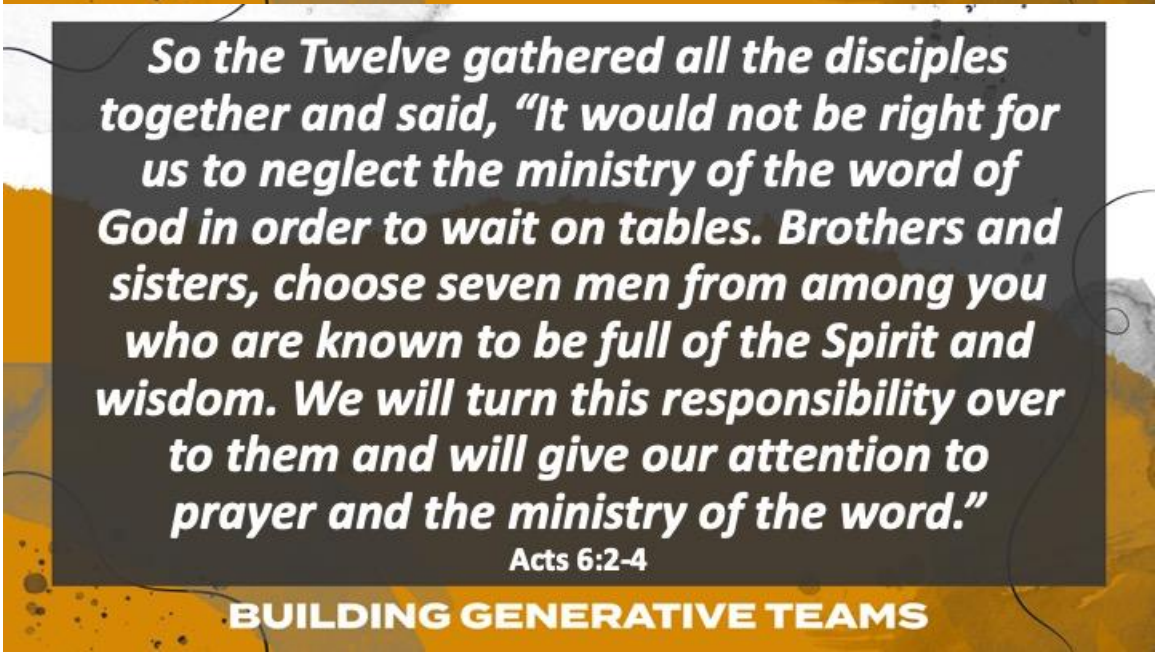

Jethro's Counsel:
"Now listen to me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with you. You should continue to be the people's representative before God, bringing their disputes to him.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

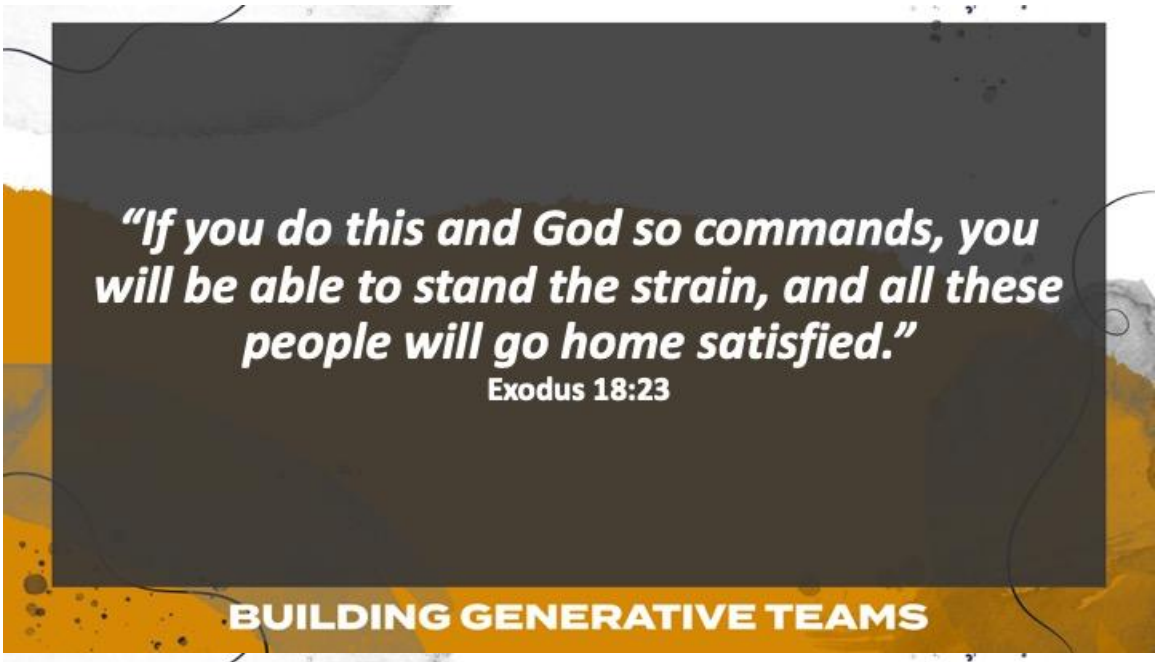

Jethro's Counsel:
Teach them God's decrees, and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their lives. But select from all the people some capable, honest men who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

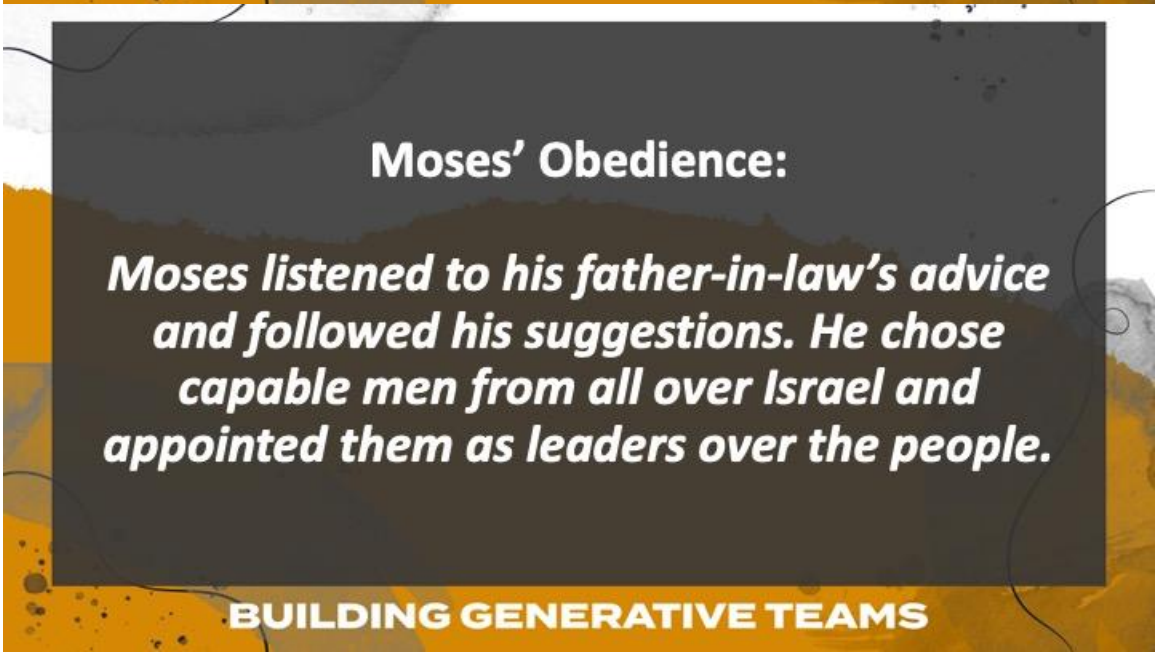

Jethro's Counsel:
They should always be available to solve the people's common disputes, but have them bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the task easier for you.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

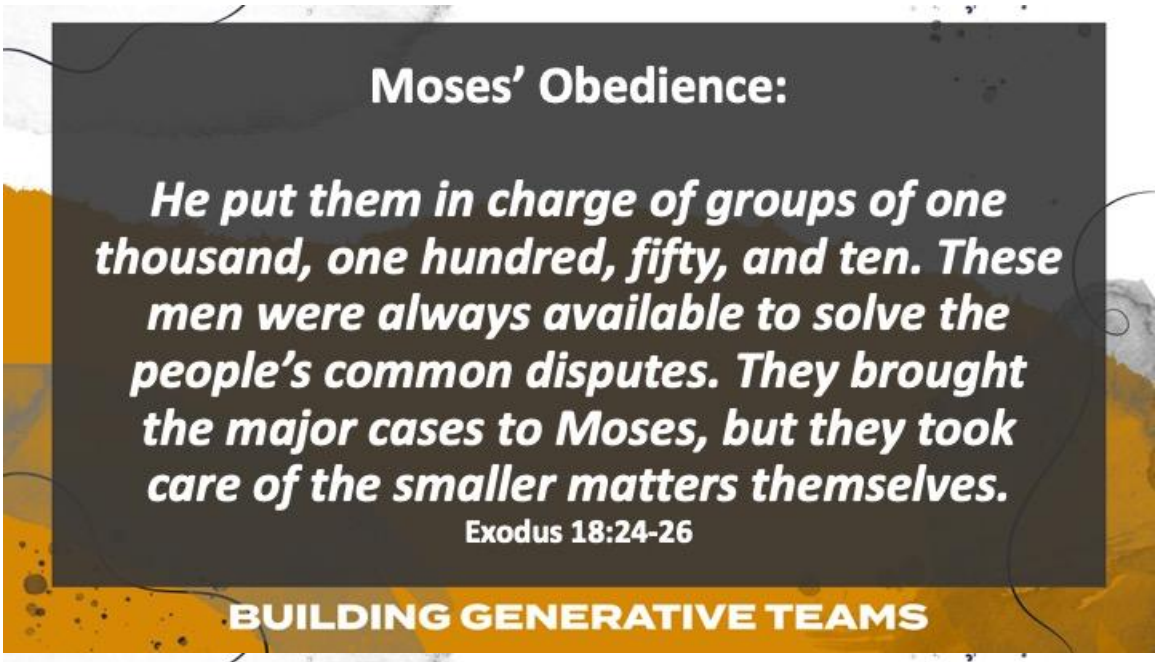

Jethro's Counsel:
If you follow this advice, and if God commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the pressures, and all these people will go home in peace."
Exodus 18:19-23
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

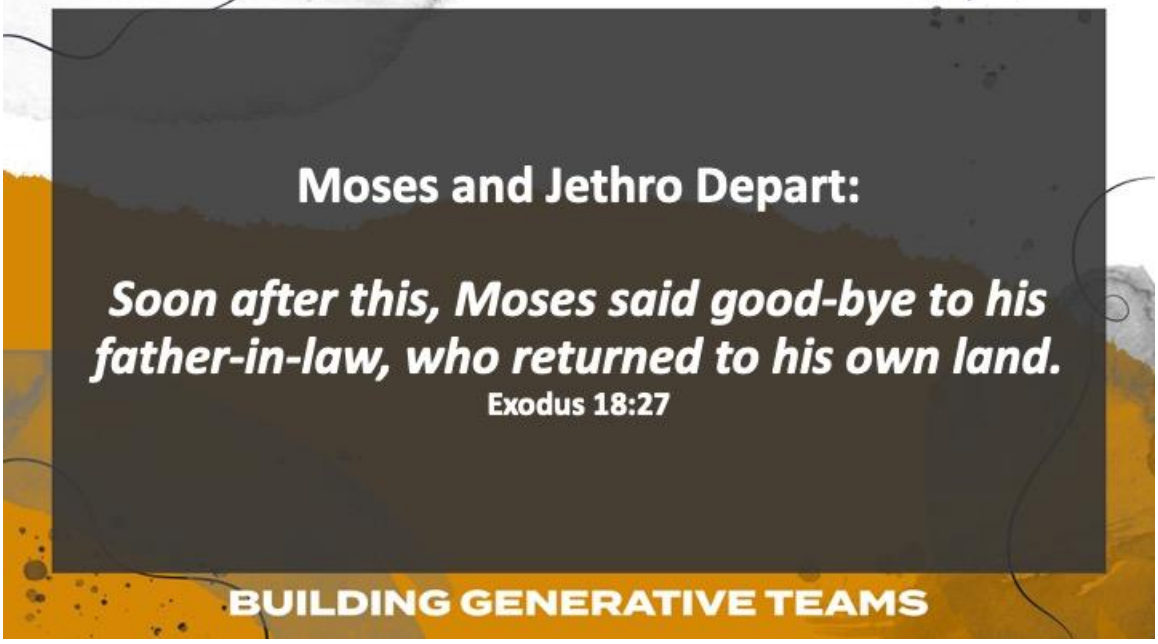
Discover
Develop
Deploy
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
Acts 6:2-4
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

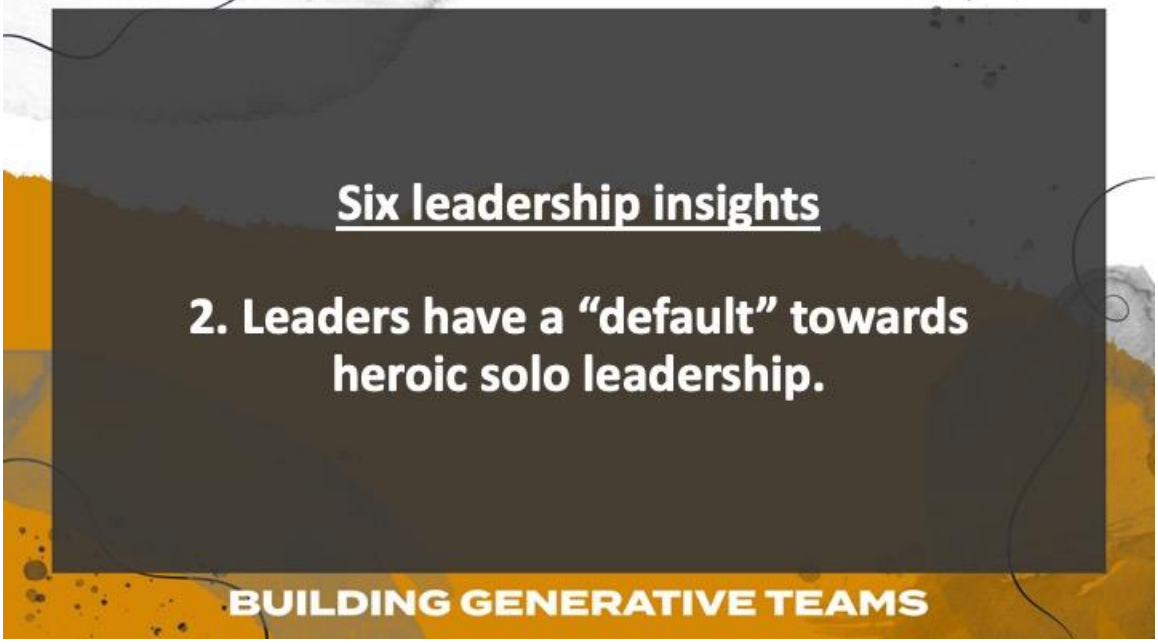

"If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."
Exodus 18:23
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Moses' Obedience:
Moses listened to his father-in-law's advice and followed his suggestions. He chose capable men from all over Israel and appointed them as leaders over the people.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Moses' Obedience:
He put them in charge of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. These men were always available to solve the people's common disputes. They brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller matters themselves.
Exodus 18:24-26
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Moses and Jethro Depart:
Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who returned to his own land.
Exodus 18:27
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

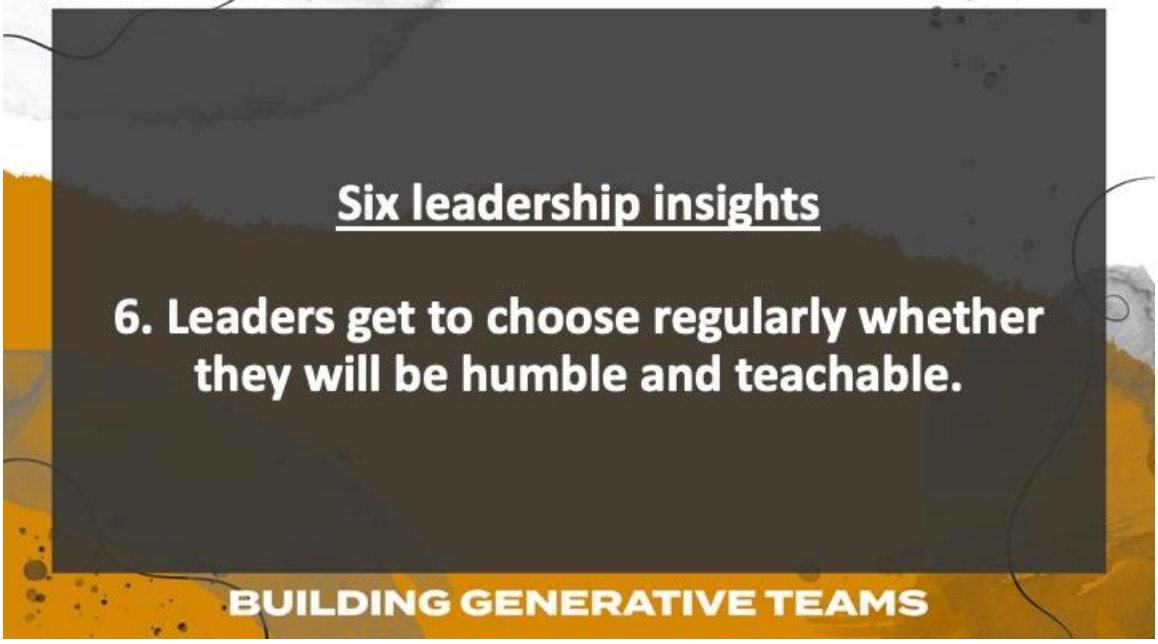
Six leadership insights
1. God needs and makes use of leaders.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

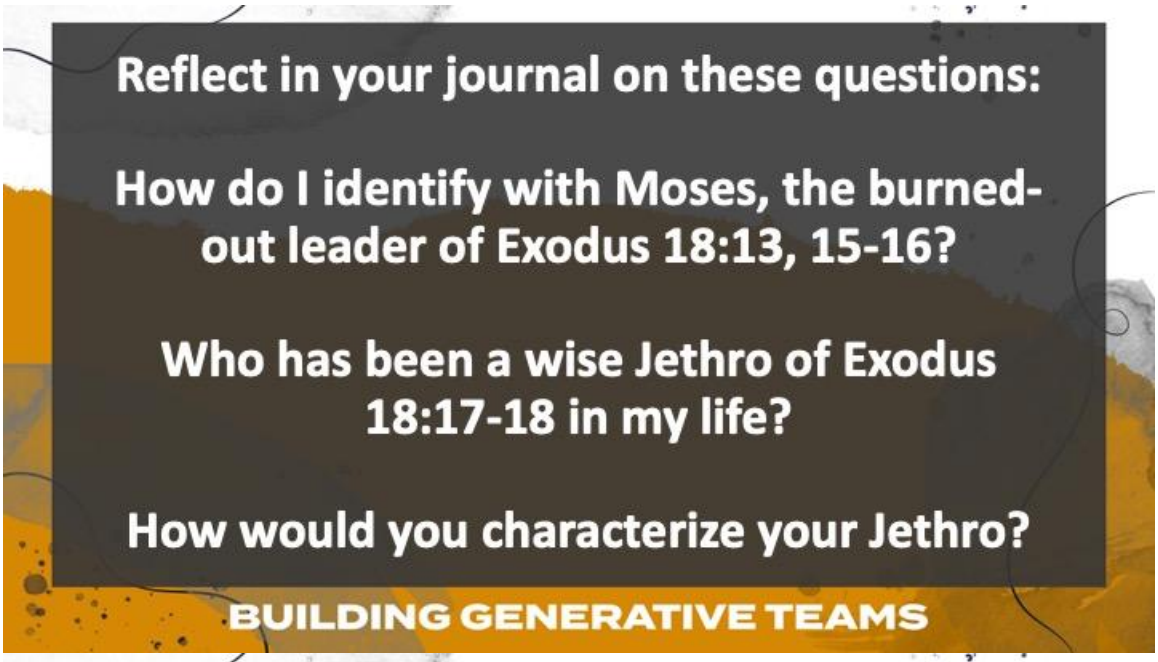

Six leadership insights
2. Leaders have a "default" towards heroic solo leadership.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

Six leadership insights
3. Leaders have limits.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

Six leadership insights
4. Leaders need catalyzing defining moments to grow.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

Six leadership insights
5. Shared leadership gives "tov" (goodness) to both leaders and the organizations they lead.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Six leadership insights
6. Leaders get to choose regularly whether they will be humble and teachable.
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS


Reflect in your journal on these questions:
How do I identify with Moses, the burned-out leader of Exodus 18:13, 15-16?
Who has been a wise Jethro of Exodus 18:17-18 in my life?
How would you characterize your Jethro?
BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

BUILDING GENERATIVE TEAMS

APPENDIX E

PRE AND POST-SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRES

Pre-Seminar Questionnaire

1. How would you define a heroic solo leader?

2. How would you define a generative and adaptive team?

3. What are the major roadblocks to building generative teams?

4. Rank order (1=most important/5=least important) the characteristics of an effective leader:
    a. _____ Bold visionary
    b. _____ Effective communicator
    c. _____ Team builder
    d. _____ Community activist
    e. _____ Compassionate presence

5. Explain your ordering the characteristics of an effective leader.

6. Rank order (1=most important/5=least important) the characteristics of a vital and sustainable ministry team:
    a. _____ They trust one another.
    b. _____ They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
    c. _____ They commit to decisions and plans of action.
    d. _____ They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
    e. _____ They focus on achievement of collective results.

7. Explain your ordering the characteristics of a vital and sustainable ministry team.

Post-Seminar Questionnaire

1. How would you define a heroic solo leader?

2. How would you define a generative and adaptive team?

3. What are the major roadblocks to building generative teams?

4. Rank order (1=most important/5=least important) the characteristics of an effective leader:
    a. _____ Bold visionary
    b. _____ Effective communicator
    c. _____ Team builder
    d. _____ Community activist
    e. _____ Compassionate presence

5. Explain your ordering the characteristics of an effective leader.

6. Rank order (1=most important/5=least important) the characteristics of a vital and sustainable ministry team:
    a. _____ They trust one another.
    b. _____ They engage in unfiltered conflict around ideas.
    c. _____ They commit to decisions and plans of action.
    d. _____ They hold one another accountable for delivering against those plans.
    e. _____ They focus on achievement of collective results.

7. Explain your ordering the characteristics of a vital and sustainable ministry team.

APPENDIX F

FOCUSED JOURNALING EXERCISE

Focused Journaling Exercise

The focused journal will seek to measure the change in mind, heart and proficiency of church leaders to build generative teams that lead sustainable and vital ministries. Attendees will be given a journal and invited to reflect each week on the following questions:

1. Week 1: Who or what have been the influences of my understanding of being a leader? What kind of leader am I? How would I define "team?"
2. Week 2: How do I identify with Moses, the burned-out leader of Exodus 18:13, 15-16? Who has been a wise Jethro of Exodus 18:17-18 in my life? How would characterize your Jethro?
3. Week 3: How does what I learned about "John Wesley and the People Called Methodists" and the way they grew maturing disciples impact my life and leadership?
4. Week 4: How does the nature of the Trinity as Team influence my understanding of team?
5. Week 5: How does the idea of generative teams that address adaptive challenges encourage and challenge you? Why?
6. Week 6: What in you keeps you from being and becoming a generative team leader? How are you encouraged in your journey to being and becoming a generative team leader? Why or why not?

APPENDIX G

IN DEPTH INDIVIDUAL FOCUSED INTERVIEW

In depth Individual Focused Interview
Participant 1

The in-depth individual interviews following the seminar will seek to glean feedback to validate or invalidate the hypothesis of this project. Their journal writing will be reviewed during this interview. The interview questions are:

1. What barriers exist in you to being a generative team leader who builds generative team? What do you need to "unlearn" so that you can resist heroic solo leadership and embrace and cultivate being a generative team leader who builds generative teams?

2. Prior to the seminar modules, what were your general impressions/experience with generative team leadership?

3. How did the seminar modules impact your thoughts about the journey from heroic solo leadership to generative team leadership?

4. What tensions come to mind about this journey?

5. What further resourcing would be helpful to you as a leader on this journey?

6. Anything else you would like to share about the seminar experience?

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